Blackout hits Luzon; Napocor head fired

Story Below, Column 1

Brownback backs off, says GMA

By Carlito Pablo

"QUITE apologetic," was how President Macapagal-Arroyo described US Sen. Sam Brownback after they spoke on the phone on Saturday.

The President said her phone conversation with Brownback centered on the latter's statement to the US media last week that "the Philip-

BROWNBACK/ A13

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2002 ★ 38 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 45 ₱15

Bar girls welcome GIs

By J. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—If nothing else, the women working in the bars here have been made aware of the importance of safe sex.

"I don't think the Americans will unleash an AIDS epidemic here,"

BAR/ A13

MGA PAPA, HANDA NA KAMI SA LABAN!
E SA AIDS?
Kor.

Guingona agonizes

Veep disagrees with President over presence of American troops

By Amando Doronila

VICE President Teofisto Guingona is agonizing over whether to make an open break with President Macapagal-Arroyo over the deployment of American troops in Basilan island and over a new military agreement with the United States, he admitted to the Inquirer over the weekend.

He said his dilemma was whether to live with a policy he disagreed with or risk pulling down the administration he had helped install in power—by resigning from the Cabinet as secretary of foreign affairs.

Guingona said he would again raise these issues at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) tomorrow, after raising them in three previous meetings with the President.

Yesterday, he told reporters he had already submitted to the NSC a proposal that concerned "security." Department of Foreign Affairs sources privy to the proposal said the Vice President would make a strong position against the extended stay of the American troops and cite violations of the Constitution.

But Guingona refused to disclose the contents of his own proposal, describing them merely as "sensitive."

"The nature of what we are discussing is very sensitive that (it) may involve life," he said.

Two issues lie at the heart of the

GUINGONA/ A13

OVER here, US military personnel arrive on Jan. 20 at Andrews Air Force Base in Zamboanga City. US C-130 planes brought more equipment for 660 American troops who are reportedly training and advising their Filipino counterparts in counter-terrorism specifically on how to deal the Abu Sayyaf bandits a fatal blow.
GETTY IMAGES

RP-US deal signed by AFP chief

By Juliet Javellana and Cynthia D. Balana

THE PACT entered into by the Philippines and the United States is really a 10-year "arrangement" to provide mutual military support, supplies and services, a ranking official told the Inquirer, adding that it was Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva who signed for the Philippines.

The veteran official, who requested anonymity, suggested that the parties chose an arrangement rather than an agreement because it would facilitate matters.

"An agreement is contracted by two parties to implement the same thing. It becomes part of the laws of the land. An arrangement really means *aregluhan* or *ayusan* (a fix-

RP-US/ A12

Business bullish on GMA gov't

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ROSE-TINTED glasses seem to be in fashion among the country's big businessmen as a recent survey by the Makati Business Club showed that nearly half of the respondents forecast stronger economic growth this year.

In a statement, the MBC said the survey results—which had 96 respondents representing 12.3 percent of the group's 700-plus members—"reflect the continued support for and approval of the Macapagal administration."

The MBC survey was conducted

BUSINESS/ A12

'Southeast Asia next haven for terrorists'

SOUTHEAST Asia could be the next haven of international terrorists, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes warned yesterday as he defended a controversial RP-US military training exercise in Western Mindanao.

Reyes cited the arrest in Manila last week of an Indonesian believed to be an explosives expert of the Jemaah Islamiyah organization, an alleged terrorist group operating in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Following a tip from Singaporean authorities, Army intelligence agents arrested Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi in Quiapo in Jan. 15. Three of his suspected Filipino accomplices were subsequently arrested while a cache of high-powered firearms and explosives were seized in General Santos City.

Police said that al-Ghozi had links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network and that the guns and explosives were intended for terrorist attacks in Southeast Asian countries.

"So what does this say? I think the more we go into it, the more we will find out that this global threat of terrorism is real," Reyes said over local television.

Indonesia and Malaysia both have Muslim-majority populations, he noted.

"We have a smaller (Muslim) population, but quite aggressive. We have the Abu Sayyaf group, which has demonstrated the capacity and the stomach to behead people, and be proud of it," Reyes

SOUTHEAST/ A13

Woman heads special court to try Erap; Badoy out

PALACE DEFENSE: Row upon row of riot policemen, three firetrucks and a barbed-wire barricade block members of the pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty who stage a rally in Mendiola on Monday to protest the Macapagal presidency. *(Story on Page A4)*
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

By Volt Contreras and Norman Bordadora

A WOMAN replaced Joseph Estrada in Malacañang, and now another woman will head a special court that will try him.

The deposed President actually got what he wanted—that Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Anacleto Badoy be inhibited from hearing the plunder case filed against him.

Associate Justice Minita Chico Nazario will head the "special division" designated yesterday by the Supreme Court en banc to take over Estrada's four cases, including the main case of plunder, and other cases that might be filed against him.

The new division's members are Associate Justices Edilberto Sandoval and Teresita Leonardo de Castro.

The Supreme Court said it had deemed it best to form the special division because of "the prominence of the principal accused and the importance of the immediate resolution of the cases to the Filipino people and the Philippine government."

Nazario is concurrent chair of the Sandiganbayan's fifth division; Sandoval, chair of the second division; and De Castro, senior mem-

WOMAN/ A12

Blackout hits Luzon; Napocor head fired

By Dona Pazzibugan, Ronnel W. Domingo and PDI Northern and Southern Luzon Bureaus

NATIONAL Power Corp. chief Jesus Alcordo yesterday lost his job hours after Luzon was hit by a blackout that once again fueled rumors of a coup d'etat.

It was the second Luzon-wide power outage in as many months.

President Macapagal-Arroyo kept her word that heads would roll in the state-owned power firm if another blackout followed the power outage that hit the entire Luzon in November last year.

The President, who disclosed that she had accepted Alcordo's resignation, said she would replace Alcordo with someone from the ranks.

The military swiftly sought to allay fears of another destablization attempt in the wake of the outage.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the incident was a "technical problem."

"This is not related whatsoever (to any coup attempt) There is no sabotage. It was due to this unexpected development," Reyes told defense reporters.

Power was cut starting 1:10 p.m. amid loud blasts, which Napocor officials said was due to a short circuit that occurred when an overhead groundwire in a Tayabas substation snapped.

A groundwire diverts lightning from the transmission lines, according to Jo Mangila, corporate communications manager of Napocor.

BLACKOUT/ A12

Inquirer policy on gifts clarified

UNDER Section X of the Inquirer Manual of Editorial Policies, "money, whether in the form of cash, checks, ATM deposits or gift checks, is an absolute no-no. No money shall be accepted in consideration of the publication of a press release."

The same section provides that "a gift, given at Christmastime or some other occasion, that exceeds a value of P4,000 should be returned immediately with an explanation that it is against journalistic ethics and company policy to accept such a gift.

"If it's impractical to return the gift or if its return would publicly embarrass a news

INQUIRER/ A12

IBA KASI ANG MGA PRIORITY NILA!

Power budget cut by 72%

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo exchanges pleasantries with leaders of Congress shortly after signing the national budget into law, which gives the lawmakers more pork barrel funds. EDWIN BACASMAS

Gloria signs pork-laden spending law for 2002

BY CYNTHIA D. BALANA
AND DONA PAZZIBUGAN

THE 2002 national budget which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed yesterday has slashed the allocation for energy by P2.9 billion, or 72 percent, just when a massive power cut blacked out the entire island of Luzon leaving some 35 million people without electricity.

By comparison, legislators voted to increase their "pork barrel" this year by 70.5 percent, from P3.33 billion to P5.67 billion.

The "pork barrel," now called the Priority Development Assistance Fund, was among the budgetary allocations that received the highest percentage increase.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara accused the President of squandering the opportunity to recast the national budget and warned the "drastic and unnecessary cut" in the energy allocation has dimmed any chance for the country to ease brownouts and power outages.

No veto

The President did not veto any major items in the P780.8 billion national budget for 2002, also known as the General Appropriations Act that she signed into law yesterday.

Angara said the allocation for power and energy was 72 percent lower than last year's, resulting in the allocation of only P1.1 billion for power this year against P3.9 billion in 2001.

He claimed that the 2002 budget had dropped important social expenditures and growth enhancement items in favor of police and military spending.

"The big cut in the 2002 allocation for power and energy reflects the low priority given by the Macapagal-Arroyo administration to vital and strategic spending programs," he said.

Angara said he would propose a supplemental budget of P26 billion to augment what he described as a "P781-billion sub-maintenance" budget.

Congress passed in late December the budget measure proposed by the executive department, with only minor adjustments in the allocations.

Pork and other gainers

Aside from the congressional pork barrel, the major "gainers" were: government-owned and -controlled corporations whose funding support increased by 478.7 percent, from P16.9 million to P97 million; the Agrarian Reform Fund, up 207.9 percent, from P1.1 billion to P3.5 billion; the agriculture department's modernization fund, up 67 percent from P8.5 billion to P14.2 billion; and the Metro Manila Development Authority, up 42.8 percent, from P639 million to P913 million.

"I am grateful to Congress for sharing our perspective and rest assured that we will abide by their will," Ms Macapagal said during the signing ceremonies at Malacañang.

She said she only vetoed "minor items" in order to be consistent with budgetary rules and regulations.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the budget was "definitely an anti-poverty budget."

She said the seven items vetoed by the President were "procedural" and did not touch on the appropriations.

The budget increased by 11.6 percent from the P699.9 billion appropriated last year.

Biggest share

By sector, the social services sector got the biggest share, with P233.9 billion or 30 percent of the budget.

This was followed by debt service with P204.3 billion or 26.2 percent; the economics sector, P158.9 billion or 20.3 percent; general services sector, P136.1 billion or 17.4 percent, and defense with P41.5 billion or 5.3 percent.

Lobbying on for Alvarezes' posts

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday disclosed that various personalities are intensely lobbying for the posts of Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

The two Alvarezes are among the few Cabinet officials who have yet to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments.

It did not help that the President did not submit their re-appointment papers along with those of other bypassed Cabinet members before Congress resumed last week.

In an interview with dzMM, Ms Macapagal said she would re-appoint the two "as long as I know they have a chance." But Heherson Alvarez had said he had been re-appointed and showed a document dated Dec. 23 to prove it.

She admitted that "it is true that there is strong lobbying" from others who want to replace the two Alvarezes.

"My advice to the two is to keep on campaigning (before the CA members), to explain their side and to find solutions to the complaints that have reached the congressmen," she said.

She said that in the meantime, she is not preparing a "shortlist" for their possible replacements.

Strunk leaves for US

BY NORMAN BORDADORA

ROD Lauren Strunk, husband of slain actress Nida Blanca, left for the United States last night to attend to his ailing mother.

Immigration intelligence officer Rudy David said Strunk was to board Philippine Airlines Flight PR 104 at 10 p.m. yesterday.

The flight was bound for California. Strunk was on the Bureau of Immigration watchlist prior to his departure.

After signifying that he wanted to leave the country to attend to his mother in the US, he was allowed to leave since no court order was issued against his departure.

Strunk said his mother has leukemia and has been given only a few days to live.

Pinoy workers banned in Oman

THOUSANDS of Filipino workers, businessmen and tourists are still not allowed entry in Oman because three Omani nationals suspected as terrorists were arrested here last September in support of the United States, according to Consul General Noordin Pendosina Lomondot of the Philippine Embassy in Oman.

Lomondot said despite the official apology extended by Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona, the Oman government has maintained the ban against Filipinos.

The ban was imposed by the Omani government in October, shortly after its three nationals were arrested by the police a few days after the Sept. 11 bombings on the United States.

The three were suspected of plotting to bomb the US Embassy here.

The three suspects were nabbed in Bayview Hotel fronting the US Embassy in Manila in the middle of September.

Subsequently, the three Omanis were deported.

Apparently antagonized by the action of the Philippine government, higher authorities in Oman demanded an apology and claimed their citizens were in the Philippines as "legitimate tourists" and were to conduct "legitimate business."

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Proudly Filipino, he hails from Barrio Malabbac, Iguig Town, Cagayan Province in Northern Luzon. He is a Bachelor of Science Electrical Engineering '66 cum laude of the Mapua Institute of Technology and an MS electrical engineering and computer science graduate of Stanford University. A shining example and role model for every aspiring IT student and starting entrepreneur, and, living proof that a Filipino has what it takes to be counted as one of the best in the world.

He was conferred the degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, by the Mapua Institute of Technology during its 109th Commencement Exercises last April 19, 2000.

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No more media hype in Gloria visits to poor

By Carlito Pablo
and Gerald G. Lacuarta

IN ORDER to stifle criticism of her sorties to poor communities, President Macapagal-Arroyo has banned the press from covering her visits from now until Feb. 25, the 16th anniversary of People Power I.

The President said that with the prohibition, she hoped her critics would stop saying there's a thin line between her doing her job and her campaigning this early for the 2004 elections.

"That's why I want to thicken that line. Maybe if there's no media coverage, I would appear less to be campaigning," Ms Macapagal said in Filipino during an interview over radio station dzMM.

The President said reporters covering Malacañang would be asked instead to "rest in the lounge" and get the news of her activities from presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao.

"I want to give it a try and I think I might be able to solve a lot of real problems if the people were talking to me rather than to the media," the President said.

In his homily last Sunday commemorating the first anniversary of Edsa II, Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin advised the President to keep out of the spotlight.

"It's very easy for me to obey," Ms Macapagal said yesterday.

But if visiting poor communities, giving away groceries and spurious land titles and having symbolic lunches are the extent of this administration's help to the poor, then there is no hope for the poverty-stricken under this government, said party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran (Bayan Muna).

Beltran scored the President for her failure to implement radical economic and political reforms one year after being installed into office by People Power II.

Beltran said her failures are the reason behind the people's disappointment with her leadership, as shown by the latest performance surveys, which are down.

"The die has been cast for the Macapagal administration and, from here on in, protests will be erupting left and right," Beltran predicted.

Beltran also said he doubted the President would be able to heed Cardinal Sin's advice to stop publicizing her visits to poor communities and her other works of charity.

"She will not be able to help it. In fact, she does not have a choice but to publicize her sorties since these are the only quantifiable measures by which her administration could show that it's serving the people. If these events are not longer publicized, then she won't have anything to show anymore," Beltran said.

Jose Ma. Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said the President might be out of office in a year's time due to the confluence of issues besetting her administration.

Sison, who lives in exile in the Netherlands, said the entry of United States military forces in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf might be the "last straw" that could break her government.

"Wishful thinking," the President retorted to the predictions she would not be able to finish her term in 2004.

She, however, confirmed that there are parties that continue to plot her ouster.

"Yes, there are plans because there are people (still) conspiring," she said in the same radio interview, without naming the alleged plotters.

"However, they have just started scheming when they get discovered," she added.

Tondo fiesta turns bloody

THE ANNUAL Feast of the Sto. Nino (Christ Child) in Tondo, Manila, on Sunday turned bloody after six persons, including two policemen and a 5-year-old girl, were killed in separate bloody incidents.

Police identified those killed as Valenzuela police Senior Insp. Roy Cruz, 34, of 602 Coral St., Tondo; his brother Rommel, 36, an overseas Filipino worker, and PO1 Ramil Saminiano, 29, a member of the Malabon Police and of 1373 Franco St., Tondo, Manila.

The other dead revelers included 5-year-old Eden Gosem, of 264 Imelda Extension, Tondo, and stabbing victims Arnel Esperanza, 34, of 1201 Lualhati St., Tondo, and Dennis Parocruz, 35, a native of Aklan.

Senior Insp. Cruz engaged in a shootout with PO1 Saminiano around 5 p.m. Sunday front of 1381-B Franco St., Tondo, at 5 p.m. Sunday. When the smoke cleared, the two policemen and Cruz's brother were almost dead.

Police said that minutes before the gunfight, a rumble erupted between two rival youth gangs which was pacified by barangay chair Aurelio Sese.

A few minutes later, however, another commotion occurred, and neighbors asked Cruz, a resident in the area, for help. Cruz and his brother arrived at the scene on a motorcycle.

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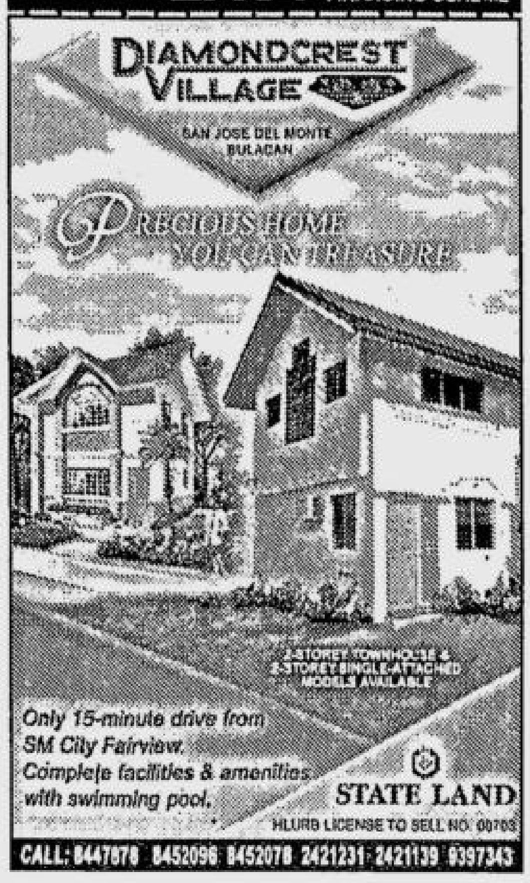

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Gloria vows 'full force of law' vs kidnappers

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes kidnap victim Jacky Rowena Tiu in Malacañang to assure her of the prosecution of her kidnappers.

EDWIN BACASMAS

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo vowed yesterday to unleash "the full force of the law" on seven Chinese nationals charged with abducting the daughter of a prominent La Union businessman last September.

The victim, Jacky Rowena Tiu, and her father, Rudy Tiu, came to see the President in Malacañang yesterday morning. They said they were being harassed and threatened into dropping the case.

Although kidnapping for ransom is not a bailable offense, the Tius said the Chinese Embassy in Manila interceded in behalf of suspects Zhang Du and Zhang Xi Wang, resulting in the charges against them being downgraded to "accessories to kidnapping."

The lesser charge allowed the suspects to post bail in December and reportedly flee the country.

"I commend the Tiu family, especially Jacky, for their courage, determination and unwavering decision to get this syndicate at all costs," said Ms Macapagal after the meeting.

"The full force of the law and the resources of the government will be applied swiftly and earnestly against the kidnappers of Jacky, the mastermind and the syndicate behind her abduction," the President added.

Ms Macapagal ordered Justice Secretary Hernando Perez to "relentlessly" prosecute the case.

She also told national police chief Director General Leandro Mendoza to personally see to the safety of the Tiu family.

She likewise ordered military intelligence to assist the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force in going after the kidnap syndicate "because of findings it is part of a transnational syndicate involved in illegal drugs."

"No stone should be left unturned in running after those who continue to harass and threaten the family," she said.

Jacky Tiu was released in October after her family reportedly paid P10 million in ransom.

Police recovered the ransom and arrested the seven suspects who were residing in Bacoor, Cavite. The suspects are believed to be from the Fookien region of China.

Pro-Erap groups seeking alliance with anti-Gloria blocs

By Philip C. Tubeza
and TJ Burgonio

GROUPS loyal to deposed President Joseph Estrada are holding exploratory talks about a possible alliance with activists who participated in Edsa II but have become disillusioned with the current administration.

This as the pro-Erap groups pushed yesterday for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the holding of snap elections, during a rally in Mendiola that was generally peaceful until a group of former soldiers tried to enter Malacañang.

Arnold Obina, spokesperson of the People's Movement Against Poverty, said they are talking with some groups that participated in Edsa II but have since become disappointed with President Macapagal's performance.

He said these former allies of the President recognized that the violent "Edsa Tres" protest on May 1 last year was a "legitimate protest of the poor."

He declined to name the groups, saying they might be harassed by the administration if their identities were divulged.

The pro-Estrada marchers who trooped to Mendiola yesterday were subdued and even tried to befriend the rows of anti-riot policemen who blocked their path to the presidential palace.

They offered a few moments of silence and prayers for their comrades who fell during the bloody May 1 siege of Malacañang.

They also vented their ire on President Macapagal by throwing fish paste (*bagoong*) at her effigy, which surprisingly sported blonde hair, a fad popular among youngsters belonging to the masses.

Obina said the crowd numbered 5,000 but Senior Supt. Eduardo Bulaong, Western Police District deputy director for operations, said there were only 700 protesters.

The authorities were ready for them with 3,000 anti-riot policemen, three fire trucks and lots of barbed wire.

The precautions, however, almost did not stop 27 former soldiers, led by a certain Sgt. Alberto Muto, from trying to enter Malacañang's Gate 7 from Nagtahan Bridge.

Metro Manila police chief Edgar Aglipay said the 27 were "cashiered soldiers" who wanted to have an audience with the President. They wanted to get reinstated into the Army, he said.

The ex-soldiers, who were unarmed and in civilian clothes, were intercepted as they tried to enter the palace grounds.

"I talked to them. In fact, I treated them to a snack and they decided to go home," Aglipay said.

In San Juan, Metro Manila, bailiwick of the Estradas, local officials including Mayor JV Ejercito, the ex-president's son, wore black armbands in protest over the nationwide observance of Edsa II.

Ejercito and the town's councilors said the military-backed people's revolt that led to the ouster of his father wasn't worth celebrating at all.

"For us, this is a day of mourning because after a year, life has become harder, the economy took a nosedive and more people lost their jobs. We should really be mourning," Ejercito told reporters.

Ejercito also dismissed allegations that pro-Estrada supporters were plotting destabilization moves against the administration.

"When President Estrada was still in power, he made the supreme sacrifice to leave Malacañang to prevent bloodshed, how much more now that he's no longer in power?" Ejercito said, referring to his father's departure from the Palace on Jan. 20, as ralliers marched on Malacañang to forcibly eject him if necessary.

In Makati City, some 700 farmers and indigenous and militant group members joined another group of demonstrators yesterday at lunch at the Ninoy Aquino monument in the city.

The lunch gathering was dubbed "Tanghalian ng Mamamayan" (The People's Lunch), but without President Macapagal.

The ralliers partook of boiled sweet potatoes and bananas for their meal.

Pastor Mel Abesamis, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog (Bayan-ST), one of the event's organizers, said the mass action sought to intensify the people's indignation at "President Macapagal's betrayal of her Edsa II commitments."

The group also protested the militarist tendencies of the Macapagal government which, Abesamis said, "was no different from the abominable regime of deposed leader Joseph Estrada."

Abesamis cited records of the Alyansa sa Pagsusulong sa Karapatan ng Mamamayan (Karapatan-ST) that showed that human rights violations against civilians increased in the present administration.

He said there have been 389 cases of violations affecting 445 individuals and 1,293 families within the year of Ms Macapagal's term. ***With Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Lenny Villa family to cite CA rulings on Aquila conspiracy

THE FAMILY of slain Ateneo law student Lenny Villa will use two previous Court of Appeals resolutions upholding the conspiracy angle in the fatal hazing case when it files a motion for reconsideration of the CA decision clearing 19 fraternity members.

Carina Agarao, president of the Crusade Against Violence, said the CA issued two decisions in the early 1990s declaring the fatal hazing of Villa as a result of a conspiracy among Aquila Legis fraternity members during initiation rites.

Agarao said the CA decisions on "Florentino Ampil vs Silvestre Bello III" and "Nelson Victorino vs Judge Bayani Rivera" clearly showed that the CA considered the Lenny Villa case then as the result of a conspiracy and thus, the 19 Aquilans should not have been acquitted.

Only two of the accused, Fidelito Dizon and Artemio Villareal, were convicted of homicide. The CA said they were the ones who inflicted the fatal injuries to Villa in 1991.

"The doctor's findings also show that Lenny's death was the result of collective injury. It cannot be that only the two are guilty," Agarao said.

Ampil and Victorino are among the accused Aquilans in the Villa case while Bello was the prosecutor who filed the case and Rivera the first judge to handle the case.

Norman Bordadora

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Digest by R.B. Vera

RAM: No more coups

THE ORGANIZATION which spearheaded the civilian-backed military revolt that ousted one president and mounted several coup attempts against another has renounced coup d'etat as an instrument of change and has pledged its full support for the current Chief Executive.

The Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan said the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo "should be given the chance to put this country back on the road to prosperity."

RAM made the pledge in a joint declaration with the non-government organization Bigkis Pinoy during the celebration of the first anniversary of Edsa II over the weekend.

Leaders and members of the two organizations released a hundred white doves symbolizing peace to dramatize their call for peace, unity and progress.

"We are sick and tired of every Tom, Dick and Harry calling for a coup d'etat or People Power to effect changes in leadership," declared executive director Edward King of Bigkis Pinoy and the RAM executive committee chairman, retired Commodore Domingo Calajate, before an overflow crowd at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City.

The rally, according to a press statement released by the two organizations, was highlighted by the signing of a Joint Declaration for Unity, Peace and National Renewal between Bigkis Pinoy, represented by vice chair Tong Toledo, and RAM represented by Calajate.

RAM, then called the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, played a key role in the historic Edsa People Power uprising that ousted then President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. Bigkis Pinoy was one of the civil society groups active during the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada and Edsa II that eventually ousted him.

Leading stalwarts of Bigkis Pinoy came in full force, among them Bigkis Pinoy founding chair Efraim Genuino; current chair Jose Ledesma, who is president of St. Luke's Medical Center; executive director Edward King and Toledo.

In his speech, Genuino said "President Arroyo is doing well with her economic program," noting the lower inflation, lower unemployment and the stable peso.

"She has had significant achievements in the past year. Given enough time, she will succeed," Genuino added.

Calajate, meanwhile, called for government's constant dialogue with the people and reiterated that the principle of civilian supremacy over the military should always be honored and enforced.

In their joint manifesto, Bigkis Pinoy and RAM appealed to "all patriots and all organized groups including political parties, to join us in coming together in the spirit of unity and peace to form a true national consensus in policies and programs upon which national governance will be based."

Calajate expressed concern over "the prevailing situation in our country where our political leaders prefer to engage in political infighting and infantile bickering for selfish ends, thus disrupting the affairs of government and affecting the delivery of basic social services."

The rally was hosted by Edu Manzano and John Lesaca, who are also celebrity members of Bigkis Pinoy. Sexy actress-singer Rica Peralejo and balladeer Marco Sison rendered entertainment numbers to the delight of the crowd.

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And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did in his time of need, when he and his men were very hungry? He went into the house of God when Abiathar was High Priest and ate the bread of offering, which only the priests are allowed to eat, and he also gave some to the men who were with him." Then Jesus said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. So the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath."

Commentary

Our family gives us identity; our school gives us wisdom; our society makes us practical and useful; Jesus makes us FREE. Free from any oppression, included certain religious legalism, but first of all free for universal love and service The person who suffers of hunger is more valuable that all the grain in the fields and the bread in the world. "Persons first," is the lesson of Jesus in today's gospel. The democratic principle of "All under the law" has to be understood in the light of the gospel. The Sabbath, the day of the Lord, was meant to liberate people from the routine of workdays, facilitating family life, the listening of the Word of God and meeting other members of the community. If we reduce it only to an oppressive law, it loses its meaning and will not serve people.

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EDSA II VETERANS

They paid with their jobs

By Blanche S. Rivera

LIKE an obedient apostle, Jerry Javier heeded the call of the Catholic Church last year to go to the Edsa Shrine and defend the integrity of the government.

Javier, 29, and around 230 of his fellow workers from the Yokohama Tires Phil. Inc. marched on Jan. 17, 2001, from the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) to join the Pampanga contingent in the mass actions against then President Joseph Estrada.

They religiously kept vigil at the shrine until Estrada was ousted and their *kababayan*, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, was sworn in as President.

But for joining the protest actions, the Yokohama workers lost their jobs. They returned to the CSEZ on Jan. 21 last year to find that some of them had been suspended and the others terminated.

A three-month picket did not do them any good, the workers said. At least 30 of the picketers were hurt in the course of police harassment, they said.

The Yokohama management took back around 160 people from the Edsa II contingent, but they were suspended for at least three months for dereliction of duty.

The others, mostly officers of the Yokohama Employees Union like Javier, are still unemployed.

"Sometimes I wonder why I even got involved," Javier told the INQUIRER Friday. "Is it worth it to sacrifice your job to be patriotic? Is this the price of heeding the call of (Jaime) Cardinal Sin and (former President) Cory (Aquino) and the rest of them?"

Some, like Willy Magat, 27, tried to find other jobs, but the dismissed workers had been blacklisted at the CSEZ.

The management of Yokohama had supposedly submitted a list of their names to the Clark Development Corp., which recommends applicants for employment at the CSEZ. The list was also posted on the gates of the different multinational companies.

Magat said that when he applied for a job in a Makati-based firm, he was turned down after the interviewer asked about his involvement with the Yokohama employees who had joined the anti-Estrada protests.

On Friday the dismissed employees went to Villa San Miguel in Mandaluyong City to seek an appointment with Cardinal Sin. They had written Malacañang about their predicament, but there is no word from the President.

"That is what pains us most. We responded when they needed us at Edsa. But now, when we're the one calling for help, we hear nothing from them," Javier said.

He added: "We paid with our jobs to get her there. We're not collecting debts. All we ask is that she not forget the sacrifice of small people like us."

Yokohama Tires Phil. Inc. is a leading manufacturer of tires and a supplier to multinational motor companies like Honda, Mitsubishi, Nissan and Toyota.

Its biggest plant in Asia, based in the CSEZ and managed by Japanese executives, employs around 500 people who produce 7,000 tires daily for a minimum wage.

Loren demands wiretapping probe

By Cynthia D. Balana

MAJORITY Floor Leader Loren Legarda yesterday asked the Senate to investigate the alleged wiretapping of at least 50 prominent political figures, including her husband, in order to introduce remedial measures to the anti-wiretapping law.

Dubbed as "Oplan: Hello Partyline," Legarda said she learned of the inclusion of her husband, former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste, on the list allegedly prepared by the PNP intelligence group. The PNP has denied the report.

Oplan: Hello Partyline reportedly started during the 2001 senatorial campaign.

The list included former President Joseph Estrada, former Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Gregorio Honasan, National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco, and former National Security Adviser Jose Almonte.

The list also included heads of major publications and newspaper columnists.

According to Legarda, the extent of the injury of wiretapping activities was fully recognized as the senator-judges chose to consider a resolution originating from the Senate on this matter during the impeachment trial.

She said that the unauthorized tapping of telephone lines using communications technology was still prevalent.

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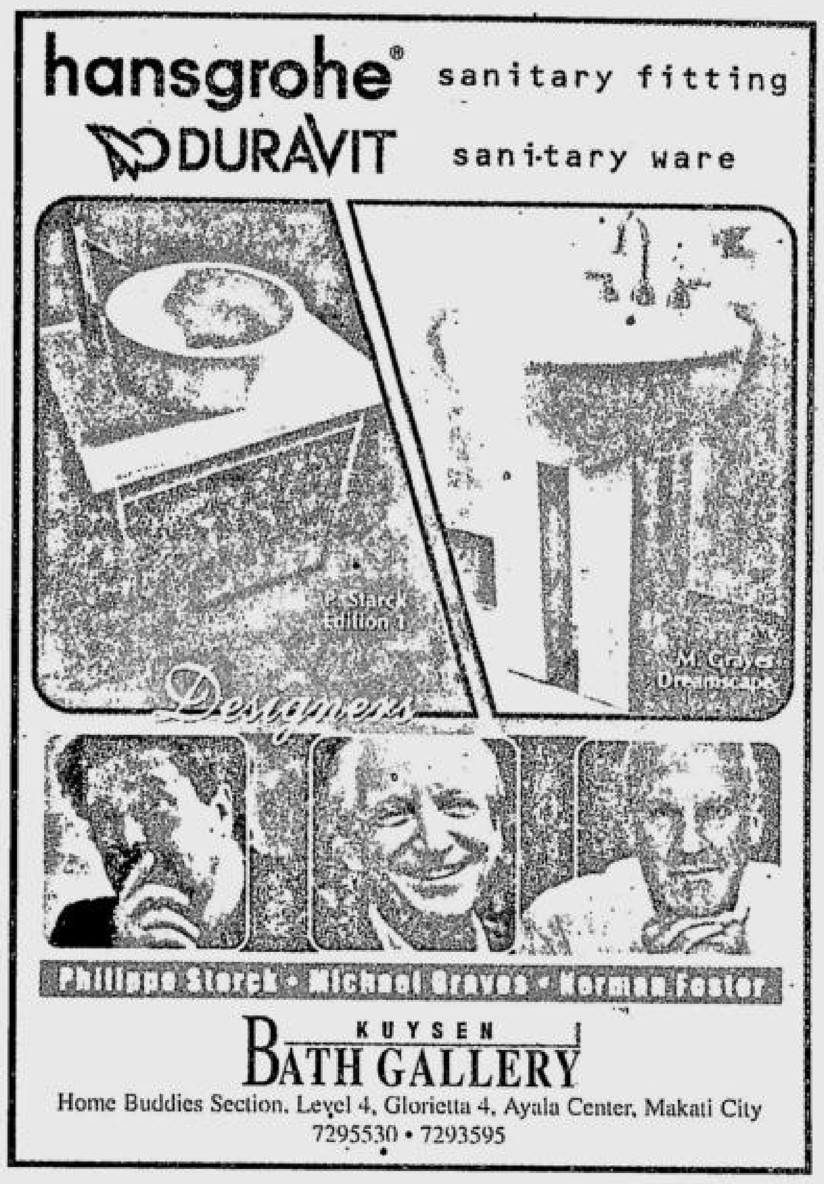
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OPINION

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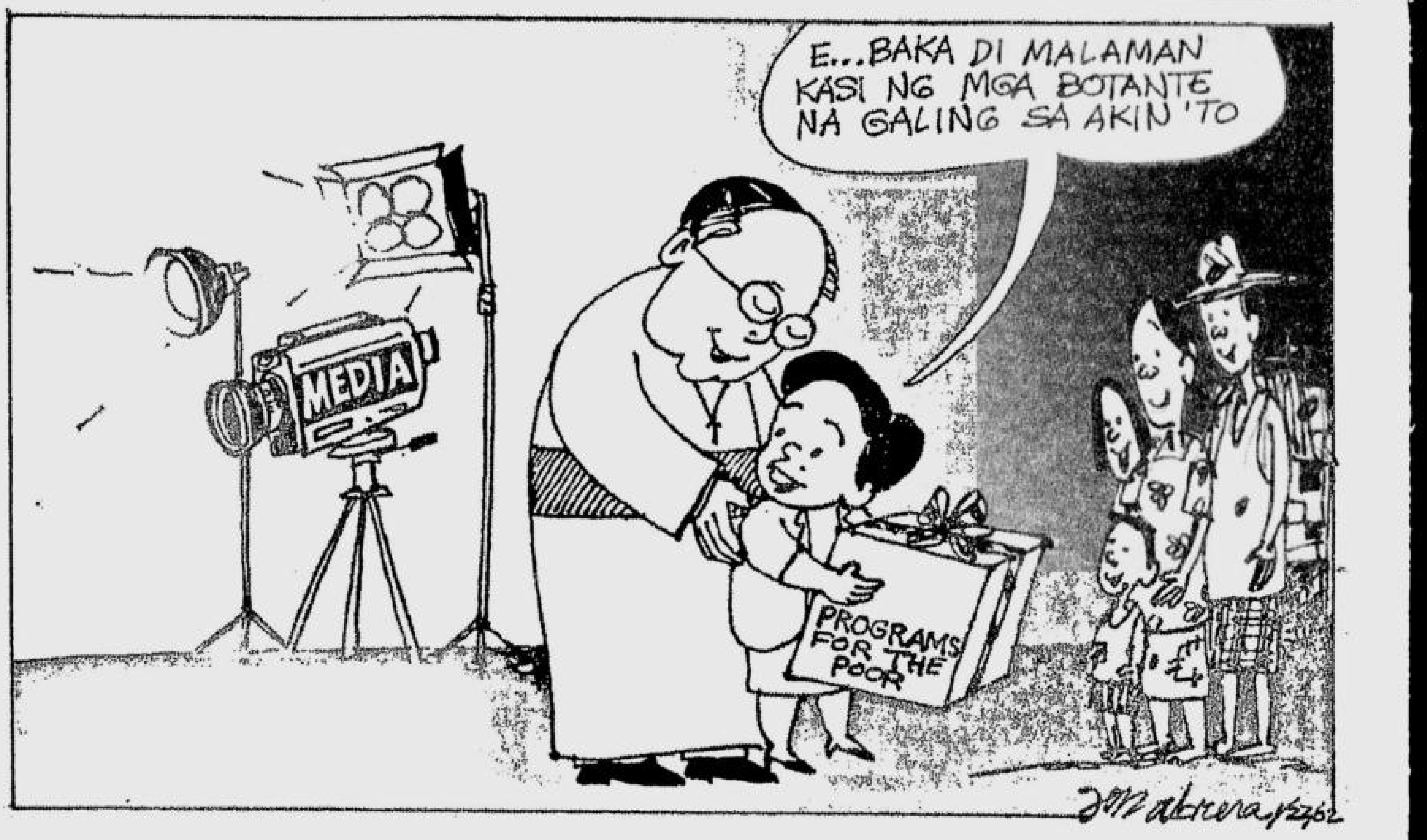
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Early warning on El Niño

EDITORIAL

HAVE you noticed that the days have suddenly become warmer? Usually, the cool weather of the Christmas season continues until the early days of February, but we're only on the third week of January and already it feels like the start of the hot and dry season.

Our layman's gut feel tells us that there must be some basis for the forecast of international scientists that El Niño could develop between April and July this year. And so we have Senate President Pro Tempore Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate committee on food and agriculture, urging the nation to prepare for the possibility of El Niño's return this year.

El Niño is a worldwide oceanographic and meteorological phenomenon that develops in the Pacific, most often off Peru. It is associated with extremely variable climate characterized by destructive rains, winds, droughts and other events that could cause economic disaster. In the past, El Niño was often felt during the Christmas season by Peruvian fishermen who then named it after the Infant Jesus ("El Niño," the Child).

The last century's worst El Niño, which occurred in 1997-98, created havoc in the Philippines. A 6.6 percent drop in agricultural production due to the drought caused the Gross Domestic Product to contract by 0.5 percent in 1998. El Niño caused a dry spell between June and October 1997 and this lingered until June 1998. Drought affected 68 percent of the country.

El Niño drastically reduced the water supply. In just one province, water for irrigation of about 27,000 hectares of rice and corn was cut off, affecting 15,000 farmer households that lost about 100,000 metric tons of rice. A total of 9,400 hectares of forest burned in 1997-98, resulting in P150 million worth of damage.

Lack of drinking water, unsanitary conditions and extreme heat made people prone to communicable diseases and caused their health to deteriorate. There were 72 reported deaths; 42 died of food poisoning from eating root crops that were not well-prepared for human consumption.

The country could see a repeat of these dire occurrences this year unless the government and its scientists can issue an early warning so everybody can prepare. A Philippine case study on the 1997-98 El Niño showed that these were the three most important lessons learned during that period:

- The President has to show political will and articulate policy to minimize the adverse effects of El Niño.
- A task force has to be formed so it can draw up a comprehensive plan that would include forewarning, education and strategic solutions.
- Information about El Niño has to be disseminated extensively to the stakeholders and the public should be involved in the responses.

Once scientists have established the strong possibility that El Nino will affect the Philippines this year, all the available rain water will have to be conserved. Trees are of course the best natural water impounder but it's rather late to start a reforestation program in the country's major watersheds. A water conservation program will just have to be started and water-impounding structures built.

Medium and small irrigation facilities will have to be built, repaired or rehabilitated as soon as possible. Other solutions have been proposed before, and they are worth repeating now: cloud seeding, mulching, use of evaporation suppressants, minimum tillage or very little or no plowing, use of organic fertilizers and drought-tolerant plant varieties and crop diversification, among other things.

Rice production in irrigated areas will have to be increased to build up a buffer stock to guard against a reduction in the global rice supply. Agricultural scientists say shallow tubewell pump irrigation can enable farmers to plant early in May and June. The rice crop can then be harvested early to avoid its being destroyed by the typhoons that begin to hit the country in October.

Other farmers will have to adjust their planting calendar to avoid critical periods as El Niño could cause a higher incidence of pestilence and crop diseases. This early, households should prepare for a water shortage and make provisions for the storage of additional water supply.

In recent history, the Philippines has experienced at least three El Niño episodes: the 1982-83 episode which brought more flooding than drought, the highly destructive 1997-98 occurrence, called the "El Niño of the century," and a mild episode starting in November 2000 and lasting until March 2001.

We don't want to go through the harrowing experience of 1997-98 all over again. An early warning will have to be issued by the government and preparations made immediately.

How to prevent overpopulation of stray animals

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

YESTERDAY, this corner said that mayors should adopt policies to control the overpopulation of stray animals mainly because of irresponsible pet owners who allow their pets to roam the streets, get pregnant and breed unwanted litters. The sensible solution is to have dogs and cats spayed or neutered but most owners don't do this because they don't want to spend for veterinarian's fees and just give or throw away the unwanted litters which grow up as strays and breed more strays.

The solution of most local governments like Marikina and Manila is to round up the stray dogs and have them redeemed by their owners after paying fines. But again, irresponsible pet owners would rather lose their pets than pay the fines. As a result, the unfortunate dogs are gassed en masse like what Hitler did to Jews during World War II. Nazi officials responsible for the Holocaust were themselves executed after the war for this atrocity, but our local government officials are not punished for doing the same thing to dogs.

Turning dogs over to the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) to look for adoptive families is a new development here. Still PAWS cannot find homes for all the captive dogs and most of them are either gassed or, worse, sold or given to drunkards to be butchered and eaten. Cannibalism is abhorred by humans, but man eats "man's best friend."

Besides, rounding up stray dogs is not as simple as letting loose a bunch of dogcatchers and dumping the dogs in cages in the city pound. There is a right way and a wrong way to catch dogs. The right way is to be humane. After all, it is not their fault that they are out in the streets. It is the fault of their irresponsible owners. It is the owners who should be punished, not the dogs. Unfortunately, it is the dogs that are caught, and it is difficult to determine who their owners are unless they come forward to claim their pets.

To add insult to injury, dogs caught by untrained dogcatchers can be injured or wounded. Their bones can be broken or otherwise wounded by the rough handling. And when they're imprisoned in tiny cages in the city pound, the living conditions are not fit even for dogs.

What I'm trying to drive at is that dogcatchers should be well-trained on the proper way to catch and handle stray dogs. And the city pound or animal shelter should have the right facilities and qualified veterinarians to care for the dogs.

Also, prevention is better than cure. Preventing the proliferation of stray animals is better than rounding them up. Preventing pet overpopulation is better than offering them for adoption. Educating irresponsible pet owners is better than punishing them.

To solve the problem of overpopulation problem, prevention (of pregnancy) is also the better solution. Many owners don't want their pets spayed or neutered because of the mistaken belief that the animals suffer (oftentimes, this is just an excuse for not wanting to pay the vet fees). But actually, the animals' health are better after the operation. Besides, there are a number of ways to prevent unwanted pregnancies, some simpler and cheaper than others. Here they are according to the "Dog Owners Home Veterinary Handbook":

The most effective method (and most popular) for females is of course spaying, or "ovariohysterectomy." In this operation, the uterus, tubes and ovaries are removed.

There are certain health benefits from spaying. No need to worry about a pyometra. A spayed bitch is less likely to have breast cancer, plus there is no messy heat to go through every year.

There are misconceptions about spaying. One is that a bitch needs to have a litter to be fulfilled. Wrong. Dogs are people-oriented. They seek human companionship and look to their owners for fulfillment.

Another misconception is that a spayed bitch becomes fat and lethargic. Wrong again. A bitch that becomes fat is getting too much to eat. A grown dog needs less food than a growing puppy. Since a bitch is usually spayed at the end of its puppyhood, if it gets too much to eat and gets fat, the operation is often blamed.

Another method to prevent conception is tubal litigation. In this operation, the fallopian tubes are ligated to prevent eggs from getting from the ovaries to the uterus. It is slightly less expensive than ovariohysterectomy, but it won't stop the bitch from going into heat and does not have the health benefits of the former.

There are also IUDs and birth control pills for dogs. The IUD for dogs is different from the IUD for humans. It works by preventing intromission. If you plan to breed your bitch later, this is the answer.

The pill for dogs is called "Ovaban" and it works by suppressing the pituitary output of follicle-stimulating hormone. It is given to the bitch at the first signs of proestrus to prevent heat and continue it for eight days. This is a little tricky, so you must consult your veterinarian.

There is a liquid contraceptive called "Cheque" which prevents ovulation. But it is recommended for bitches that will never be used for breeding.

For male dogs, there are castration and vasectomy. In castration, both testicles are removed. Added benefits: the dog becomes less aggressive and does not mark territory.

Vasectomy is recommended when sterilization alone is the reason for the surgery. In this operation, a segment of the right and left vas deferens is removed. These are the tubes that transport the sperm from the testicles to the urethra. The operation does not disturb the hormone functions of the testes.

Perfidy

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT took five decades for this country to rid itself of American military presence. It took President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo just one year to bring it back.

Completely ironically, the author of the restoration was the one President who was never voted into power. Completely ironically, the author of the restoration was the one President who was borne on the wings of People Power and reposed with its dreams, none of which included being shackled again with "special relations."

It was not without poetic justice that the one who blew the whistle on this monstrous perfidy was the one person who presided over the end of US military presence in the country. He is former Senate President Jovito Salonga, who steered the country into rejecting a new US bases treaty, which saw the last American warship sailing away from Philippine waters. Or so it seemed at the time.

It was Salonga who pointed out (he had it, he said, on the word of an informant from government) that Ms Macapagal had signed a logistics agreement with the United States, and was preparing to sign a complementary cross-servicing agreement with it soon. That puts us right back where we began, to the days of American troops and not very unlikely American fighter planes and warships. Salonga himself warns that the Americans are not going to leave even after the Abu Sayyaf is routed. That is not what they are here for.

Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee defends the indefensible by saying the presence of American troops—all 600 of them, including a unit of the Green Berets—is covered by the Visiting Forces Agreement. The American troops, he says, are in Basilan to participate in the Balikatan exercise. Well, at the very least it adds whole new dimensions to the concept of war games to have those games being played out against real people. Reminds you of that story titled "The Most Dangerous Game." The whole thing may be a game to the Americans (they have yet to expose themselves to the line of fire in the war against terrorism), but not to the residents of Basilan. The line between Muslim and terrorist is a very thin one these days and not easily seen in the field. Least of all by people who do not stand to reap the consequences of their mistake.

More than that, if indeed that is covered by the VFA, then that only exposes the bane that is the VFA, not the boon government has made it out to be. It only confirms the monumental stupidity our leaders showed in passing it, not our uncanny prescience in doing so. It only validates the fears expressed by critics that the VFA is the Trojan horse that will bring back US military presence into this country.

Other government officials justify the unjustifiable by saying the war against terrorism has become an international concern, and there are terrorists aplenty in the Philippine south. US Sen. Sam Brownback himself says the Philippines could be the next Afghanistan.

Why? Because of a small band of kidnappers who happened to have taken a couple of American hostages? The AFP reckons the Abu Sayyaf is down to only about a hundred armed men, as a result of demoralization, defection and decimation. You need American troops to deal with something like that? And as Father Nacorda et al. have revealed, the only reason the Abu Sayyaf continues to thrive is that the AFP has made them junior partners in the lucrative kidnap industry. Yes, junior: the Abu Sayyaf does all the work while the generals just sit back and get their cut.

Which brings me to one truly bizarre argument I've heard over the past week. We need the foreign troops, says one, precisely because our AFP cannot be counted upon to do the job. The exact parallel of that argument is saying that we must arm the populace because the cops are useless in preventing crime. Which is an argument for jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The cops are useless, abolish the PNP, don't turn the country into a wild, wild West. The AFP is useless, abolish the AFP, don't turn the country back into a colony.

I've always said that America's war against terrorism won't remain a reason to punish the people responsible for Sept. 21, it will turn into an excuse to push American global policy more aggressively than ever before. American media and popular culture have already been furiously preparing the ground for it, a spate of Hollywood movies offering blithe moral underpinnings for American action in foreign soil. The presence of American troops in Basilan proves it. The United States had been eyeing the coast of Dadiangas as a replacement for Subic long before Sept. 11. Wearing the mantle of the war against terrorism, it should find every excuse, or pressure point, to get it. Salonga is right: Those troops aren't likely to disappear along with the Abu Sayyaf.

Unless we protest it, of course. Which brings us back to Ms Macapagal's monumental perfidy. This country spent much blood, sweat and tears trying to rid itself of American military presence. the one thing that has debilitated us more than anything else in the world. And whose monstrous effects are visible in the toxic wastes the Americans left behind in Clark and Subic. I do most earnestly propose that she put up an alternative presidential residence in the areas in Clark where the toxic wastes are, in solidarity with her fellow Kapampagans. She may get new insights into the urgency of demanding that America clean up the mess it left behind, and the idiocy of resurrecting the arrangements that produced it.

It took Claro M. Recto, Lorenzo Tañada and Jose W. Diokno a lifetime of struggle to rid this land of its greatest plague, which was the presence of foreign troops on its soil. It has taken President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo one moment of whim to bring it back.

She has much to answer for.

Bush and GMA in same boat

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS this column was being finished, the power went off. News reports said the blackout was Luzon-wide. But whatever caused it, the timing could not be more unfortunate, as it again triggered some nervousness about threats from the anti-administration camp. There was unmistakable euphoria over the fact that the days leading to the first anniversary of Edsa II last Sunday were peaceful, but that was marred by the power tripping yesterday. Was it sabotage? There should be an investigation.

* * *

Columnist Alex Magno, writing in the Standard, cited "resident philosopher" Mario Taguiwalo's recent observation that Filipinos are great in responding to crises and resolving them with grace, but that we are totally incompetent in handling normalcy. I cannot agree more. It is in the little things of everyday life where we get bogged down, when, as the Lord says, he who is unfaithful in the little things is bound to be unfaithful in big things. This fidelity to day-to-day details has to be imparted from childhood in the homes and schools. It is said that some races are gifted with a penchant for details while others are not. I submit, however, that it is not a matter of being gifted, but buckling down to hard work.

My son Buddy, who attended a conference in Germany early last month, noted that when the Jan. 1 deadline for the change from local currencies to the euro, the common currency of 12 nations of the European Union, came, the Germans immediately put the new currency into effect and discarded the deutschmark everywhere, including in train and bus stations. On the other hand, the Italians were caught unprepared and there was a lot of confusion over changing lira into the euros.

* * *

Taguiwalo's observation about our being unable to handle normalcy doubtless was driven home to departing passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday afternoon during the power blackout. The lights were on, but unfortunately the standby generator didn't have enough power to run the computers in the immigration area, so everything was on hold and the line kept getting longer and longer. There ought to be a solution to this problem in a country where power fails for the smallest reason and without warning.

* * *

Presidents George Bush and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo may have more in common than just being children of former presidents. Ms Macapagal is under pressure from a bipartisan group in Congress to make a full disclosure of the arrangements she has approved for the utilization of American forces here. Fear has been expressed about the possible "Vietnamization" of this country with the arrival of the American advisers and that the administration may be withholding part of the truth.

Perhaps not coincidentally, her US counterpart is in the same boat. The New York Times recently wrote that the Bush administration "owes Americans a far more candid discussion of its plans (regarding US troops in RP) than it has yet presented" and asked that the US role be "clearly spelled out to the American people." The Times opined that so far it has provided "only vague and conflicting descriptions about the American role...suggesting that officials either have not thought through the plan, or are being deceptive about it." The Times recalled the Pentagon's "long and ignoble history" of announcing the dispatch of American forces abroad as "advisers, when they are really meant to be combatants." It opined that the current plan of making US troops accompany RP troops even in "offensive operations," which may appear to violate the Constitution, sounds like "the kind of loosely designed operation that has led America into costly military blunders in the past decades."

To dispel the impression that both Presidents are plotting some kind of devilish scheme, they have to be candid and frank about the US troops' involvement here.

* * *

Yesterday this column spoke of the "Buy Pinoy Movement" launched by the business community recently in response to the President's appeal for more jobs and in order to keep the factories operating. The businessmen Cecile Alvarez and I interviewed over our Sunday night program on dzRH—Raul Concepcion of the Buy Philippine-Made Movement Sergio Ortiz-Luis, the new president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Francis Chua of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce—argued that with the global market for Philippine exports now in a slump, our factories have to sell their products to fellow Filipinos in order to save jobs for our workers. They said buying Pinoy has become a matter of national survival and I cannot agree more. If all of us nearly 80 million Pinoys buy RP-made products and services, we can survive the global recession. Concepcion noted that Filipinos on the average spend some 30 percent on imported goods. If they could reduce by even just 10 percent, it would make a big difference for Filipino factories, she said.

* * *

The business executives explained that the movement has the support of all the chambers of commerce nationwide. Chua pointed out that the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce alone has some 165 chamber-members counting thousands of Filipino-Chinese businessmen as members. The movement is campaigning for Filipinos to patronize not just the products or services produced by purely Filipino firms, but also foreign brands manufactured here, such as 30 percent of the world production of Liz Claiborne and Polo Ralph Lauren, as well as the big foreign food chains employing thousands of Filipino workers.

They concede, however, that the Buy Pinoy Movement is up against some problems, foremost of which is the bias of many Filipinos against Pinoy-made goods, in the belief that they are not as good as those made abroad. Ortiz-Luis pointed out, however, that many of the items we buy abroad are made right here, such as 30 percent of imported baby clothes and some of the main components for brand-name cellphones. He disclosed that a small company in Nueva Ecija made the sets for various movie and TV shows, including the swords used in such films as "Brave Heart" and "The Highlander."

Then too the executives stressed that the playing field is not yet level for local companies, with foreign companies having an easier time getting letters of credit, assuring sure payment upon shipment of goods. They said, however, that the Department of Finance is trying to correct many infirmities that disadvantage the Pinoy manufacturers. Other big problems include the practice of dumping of goods by Western countries, rampant smuggling and peace and order.

A journey just begun

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"NIGHTMARE JOURNEYS: Filipina Sojourns through the World of Trafficking" was launched yesterday at the Café J in Makati. The book tells the stories of 14 Filipino women who found themselves trapped in the world of sex traffickers, but who somehow found the inner resources to make their way out of that world, with the help of some friends.

In her introduction, Foreign Undersecretary Rosario G. Manalo described the trafficking of human beings as a "form of modern-day slavery." Government figures place the number of Filipino women and children trafficked for purposes of prostitution at 300,000 women and 75,000 children. Note that "trafficking," while a global phenomenon, also takes place domestically.

The following are my remarks delivered at the book launching as the book's primary writer.

* * *

THE BOOK'S title is "Nightmare Journeys," and every one of the women whose stories are told in it has been on a journey. But this is not a travel book. True, many of the women tell of trips taken outside our shores. And all of them ventured far from home, on airliners, inter-island ships, ferries and for the youngest of them, on a jeepney that dropped her off at the Luneta and started her on a life-altering journey.

For many, the journeys began long before they actually stepped out of their homes. The road to their destinations was paved in their backgrounds of poverty, childhood abuse and cultural expectations. Leaving for abroad to work as entertainers was simply the quickest, easiest means of earning a living, so they could make enough money to send back home and help bring their families out of their desperate straits. As most would find out later, not only did the "quick and easy" way out turn out to be a dangerous detour, it also sunk them and their families deeper into their old problems. But this was not to be the end of the journey. The women's way out of the world of trafficking was made possible only by finding a way out of old patterns of self-doubt, low self-esteem and dependence. Escape for them meant not just an escape from the clutches of recruiters, promoters and gang lords, but also an escape toward a more confident and independent womanhood.

And this is what I hope readers will take from the stories. Not that the women were "victimized," but that they survived and ultimately triumphed. For some, the victory is not so clear-cut, and there are lapses into dark moods and despair. A few are still finding their place in the bigger world outside of bars and brothels. But they could not have made it out if they did not have stores of courage, pluck and perseverance. Not once did I feel sorry for them. After each interview, I came away filled with awe and admiration for their real-life tales of survival. For me, they will always be the "strongest links!"

* * *

THERE are many people to thank for this book. First of all, for all of you who made your own, doubtless harrowing, journeys through Monday afternoon traffic to make it to this affair. Thank you for the show of support not just for the book and its author and publishers, but for the women, too, and for the cause of eradicating all forms of violence against women.

My gratitude, of course, to the women who generously gave not just time but also opportunity costs to talk to me. More important, telling me their stories meant revisiting places, times and events they had worked so hard to forget, not an inconsiderable sacrifice, you will realize as soon as you read the stories. *Maraming salamat*, again and again, to Alicia, Bea, Carol, Catherine, Dina, Gina, Lorna, Maria, Maricar, Mary Ann, Nympha and Patricia. Some of them are here with us, and though these are not their real names, they know who they are and you may take a bow, if you wish to.

My thanks, also, to Chris de Stoop and to our friends Francois and Louise Belle Hubert-Baterna who are based in Belgium. Two of the stories, those of Nena and Angie, are culled from De Stoop's book "They are So Sweet Sir: The Cruel World of Traffickers in Filipinas and Other Women." Thank you, Chris, for your permission to retell the two women's stories, and to Louise Belle, who helped translate De Stoop's book, for your assistance.

* * *

OF COURSE, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge as well the help of all the NGOs that assisted me in contacting the women and arranging for the interviews. Many thanks to the Batis Center for Women and Batis-Aware, the Coalition against Trafficking in Women, the Development Action for Women Network or DAWN, the Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women and the Nazareth Growth Home, and the Remedios AIDS Foundation. As well, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Lorna Q. Israel and Pauline Hortelano and of Wedpro, for use of their articles in the book "Halfway through the Circle: The Lives of Eight Women Survivors of Prostitution and Trafficking," as background on the stories of Maricar and Mary Ann.

This book would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of the Unifem Philippine Committee, especially of its president, Erlinda Enriquez-Panlilio, who conceptualized the book and chose me to be the main writer. My gratitude, as well, to Tony Hidalgo of Milflores Publishing, for being such a nurturing publisher who convinced me I had it in me to write something else besides daily columns.

So many others helped in completing the book, not the least of whom are my assistant and researcher Genna Selda, and my husband Pie and children Pie2 and Miya, who had to live with a cranky writer rushing to meet an oft-moved deadline. To them and to all of you, thank you for your patience and your support. The journey continues, there is no looking back!

Orchids

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

BEFORE THE PLANT stalls at the Magallanes Commercial Center were dismantled, one could buy a flowering orchid stalk for P75. Unfortunately, these were from Bangkok. Recently in Nueva Vizcaya where orchids, ferns and other forest plants are sold along the mountain road, I asked the owner why they didn't cultivate native orchids instead. "It's cheaper and easier to import them from Bangkok," he answered. It seems we're supporting everybody else's economy but our own and in the meantime native species torn from their natural habitat and sold for a song in Baclaran will no doubt soon be extinct.

Here's a 19th century view of our native orchids which exemplifies the appreciation of foreigners for the flora of this country. In 1830, we are told, began the epoch of the awakening of the true passion in horticulturists for the cultivation of the orchid and from there originated the great collections of orchids, a name given by science to the family of what was then called *dapos* here. (*Dapos* apparently signified parasitic plants for the Spanish. However, not every *dapo* was an orchid or every orchid a *dapo*.)

The travels in the Philippines of the English naturalist Cuming, in 1836 to 1840, introduced to Europe the richness of precious orchids in Philippine mountains. The Loddiges collection received the major part of this early exploration and *Phlaeonopsis Filipinas* was proclaimed the most beautiful of the beauties. The splendid loelias and cattleyas of the New World succeeded with their dazzling colors in enhancing the whiteness of our butterfly like plants, softly stirring in their stalks like queens of the hot house.

Since then the Philippines gained a preeminent place in the collection of orchid lovers, and its mountains were then continuously explored by specialists. (A certain Mr. Boxall went reconnoitering and there is a *Dendrobium Boxalli* named after him.) Great care was lavished on these orchids, born in the putrefaction of the rain forests, even more than on pampered children of the rich.

According to the writer, the first scientific observations of orchids was done by Father Blanco, the Augustinian. (You may want to check whether the 1780s Malaspina Expedition with Cuellar's drawings did not antedate Blanco.) It was not possible for him to classify with precision, given the knowledge available to him, so that we find that the 10 species described in the 1837 edition are not in the corresponding genus. But the graphic descriptions of the great Philippine flora reveal clearly that the reason was not a deficiency on the part of the observer but the meager resources at his disposal.

In the supplement to the second edition of 1845, there are four more varieties described, among them some of the most beautiful in the country (*Phalaenopsis amabilis* and *Dendrobium macranthum*). Father Blanco studied 14 species, some 130 pertaining to the 37 classifications.

In 1853 Lindley set 394 as the number of genus of this family with more than 3,000 species. Twenty years later, Decaisne calculated it to be 433, containing not less than 6,000 species. Between 1,000 and 1,200 distinct orchids were introduced live in Europe.

More and more people toward the end of the 19th century were becoming orchid lovers and the showy blossom had its place in the aristocratic salons of Manila, nestled in elegant containers or adequately displayed in coarse coconut husks full of the graceful stalks, brilliant leaves and fantastic flowers of the *Phalenopsis, Dendrobium, Sccolabium, Vanda, Aerides, Renanthera,* which once adorned wild forests and now competed with all the splendid things of human luxury.

The article was written in 1879 after the opening of the Suez Canal and the liberalization of trade, a time perhaps when an emerging merchant class was able to enjoy certain luxuries and create a more comfortable lifestyle.

I do not know how many of the species mentioned are extinct. I do know that some years ago, a friend bought some two dozen *waling-walings* from vendors on McKinley Road and proudly hung them in her lanai, and they filled the room with their overwhelming exotic perfume. I have not seen them sold again along the streets of Makati or even in weekend markets. I did not see them along Dalton Pass either.

When I first traveled to Singapore some 20 years ago, I was asked by a relative to buy some potted orchids that were sold in the center of the city. It was no big deal. They were wrapped and packaged to make transport easier, and an export license was given there and then. Apparently the Thais learned the lesson from Singapore, and we now import from them.

It is incredible that Filipinos can be told to their face that this is a poor country so that we go around the world hat in hand, although it may be true for the coming generations who will never know that we had the resources that were either exploited for the benefit of a few or stupidly dissipated. I understand we do have a plant industry that exports cut flowers but cannot meet the demand. If the government has a program to develop an industry in the provinces rich with these resources in order to discourage their being plucked from their habitat and sold, it would be surprising. Give us a few more years and there will be nothing left to develop.

A life less ordinary

WRITERS are probably the most ordinary people in the world. They eat, sleep, make their own bed, cook their own food, take the bus, raise children, get hung-over, fall in line, fall in love (and out), fantasize, forget, and for God's sake, "they bleed." They're so ordinary that the very passion which they claim to possess gets them up in the morning.

YOUNGBLOOD

Jo Herrera

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

Writing can be done practically by every blind, deaf and mute person. All one needs is some ink and paper (or a personal computer) and a good memory. A life, by the way, should come in handy.

Not only do writers try to make people's lives and concerns more interesting than they actually are, usually they succeed at doing so. And they themselves live twice. As Natalie Goldberg once wrote: "They go along with their regular life, are as fast as anyone in the grocery store, crossing the street, getting dressed for work in the morning. But there's another part of them that lives everything a second time. That sits down and sees their life again and goes over it. Looks at the texture and details."

People with schizophrenic tendencies may make good writers. They "see" the same situation from different perspectives or points of view. Their mind seems to have the ability to play different roles at nearly the same time, getting in and out of characters like a playwright speaks to his audience through a handful of personalities. But notice how, even without a touch of schizophrenia, we view differently our childhood experiences at the age of 5 compared to when we are 25 or 50. Yesterday's family reunion may be understood differently between today and next year.

When Tweety Bird says, "I tot I saw a puddy cat. I did! I did! I did see a puddy cat!" she only means that she is certain in the same way that writers are when they finally decide to write about their experiences. My graduate school professor might have referred to such certainty as having a sense of resolution. A lack of such personal resolve usually translates, on paper, to ambivalent writing. What exactly is your point? is among the worst reactions one gets in writing workshops. Then you know it's not only back to the drawing-board but back to examining your mind—and possibly, heart.

Writing everything down without the neurotic need to correct the grammar or content in mid-composition is said to break the mental or emotional barriers that inhibit good writing. But when "burdened" with conflicting inner notions, suddenly it's not so simple to follow the basic rule: The best writing is that which speaks the truth. What makes people's lives or ideas interesting on paper is not the larger-than-life, blood-and-gory stuff but the sense of authenticity that speaks from one heart to another. Then it all makes sense. Unless we see the connection to our personal lives, nothing much makes sense to us in a film's plot that features exploding cars or sex in unusual places.

The miraculous thing about writing is that the more we let our fingers do the work, "even when the brain has not totally made up its mind," the easier the story within us unravels on print, pretty much taking care of itself. We may not be sure of how the idea in our mind will turn out on paper but once the writing begins, the story tells itself as it is meant to be told. After the initial preconceived idea, the writing seems to just take care of itself.

Sometimes, despite the deadlines and paychecks, writing does not even feel like work. Is it "work" when one talks of one's dreams and fears? After all, how can one write about anything that doesn't concern himself or herself? How can anyone write about anything that he or she doesn't know well enough?

A writer needs not experience first-hand what he writes about, he needs only to understand. Ironically, it seems that understanding can be had not just by reaching out to others but also by looking into oneself. Thus, unless you can afford your own therapist, talking to yourself on paper is the next convenient way to dig for the truth.

This may give you reason to believe that journal-writing is a lonely ride to God knows where. But the results are therapeutic to one's soul and even enlightening to one's mind. It is not impossible to find one's self through continuous writing. Such type of writing often results in the revelation of insights which otherwise may not have been obvious even to the self.

Growing up during the Great Depression, American humorist Russell Baker wrote in his memoir that as a child, he decided to become a writer when he "discovered" that writing did not require knocking on people's doors and selling anything. It wasn't the kind of job that had neighborhood dogs chasing after him or the kind that had him talking to people at length. If one weren't so dictated by one's mood, it is the kind of "work" that can be done anywhere and any time with the least amount of physical effort. (Those who develop stiff neck and headache from banging their heads against the keyboard, in a frustrating fit of mental block, may disagree.)

The most basic requirement for writing (whether for a living or otherwise) is that you have to get a life. It is, after all, in the ordinariness of life that there is dignity.

Jo Herrera, 29, is an English professor at St. Scholastica's College in Manila.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Polendey killings

CELEDONIA Polendey and her youngest son, Theodore Lindo, were found dead in their apartment in Oro Vista Subdivision, Marikina City, in the morning of March 13, 1998. Another son, Alfred Jake, had stab wounds in different parts of his body but survived.

Police recovered from the scene a short bolo, scissors and a kitchen knife. Bloodstains suggested that a furious struggle had taken place at the kitchen, bedroom and sala. The assailants took some cash from the drawers before fleeing.

Based on Alfred's description of the suspects, the police invited for questioning Renato Punzalan, a dental technician living a block away from the Polendeys' apartment. They also questioned Alejandro Balba and his brother Bienvenido and Thomas Uson. All of them admitted to have used drugs before but denied having anything to do with the killings.

Punzalan was arrested after Alfred identified him as the killer of his mother and brother. Charges of robbery with homicide were filed against him with the Marikina Regional Trial Court on March 20, 1998.

The case was raffled off to the sala of Judge Ruben dela Cruz of Branch 272. But during his arraignment on March 31, Punzalan pleaded not guilty.

On Sept. 21, the prosecution moved to amend the information to include Balba. The judge approved the motion.

On Oct. 14, the prosecution filed another motion seeking a clarification on the word "dismissed" in the judge's order. On Nov. 9, the judge explained that the term meant that "the amended information should take in place of, and supplants the original information" and should not be interpreted to mean the dismissal of the case.

Punzalan, however, asked the Court of Appeals on Jan. 4, 1999 to set aside De la Cruz's ruling, saying that his constitutional right to be informed of the nature and cause of the charges against him had been violated. On July 30, the CA's 12th Division dismissed the petition for lack of merit. Punzalan filed a motion for reconsideration which was again denied on Jan 25, 2000.

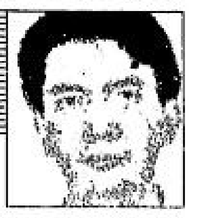
Punzalan filed a petition for review with the Supreme Court on March 1 along with a motion to litigate as a pauper.

Case status: Punzalan is still detained at the Marikina City Jail. Balba and two unidentified suspects remain at large.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

Enduring ties

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

THE ENTRY of American troops into Mindanao for joint Balikatan exercises with Filipino troops reminds us of the enduring ties that bind the United States and the Philippines.

Back in 1898 the United States got into a war with Spain and won, for which they were offered, at a dirt-cheap price of $20 million, Puerto Rico, Cuba and, almost like some bonus in a damaged goods sale, 7,100 islands across the Pacific. Agonizing over whether the United States should annex the Philippines, President William McKinley supposedly received a message from God that it was America's manifest destiny to train the Little Brown Brothers in democracy and Christianity. America tutored us for nearly a century—through a colonial occupation and independence (of sorts)—with our fair share of joint military "exercises," including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and, on Philippine soil, the war against the Huks. For good measure, the Americans kept military bases in the Philippines—the largest outside the mainland United States—until 1991, when Pinatubo and our Senate managed to get them to leave.

Now, I guess, we should be grateful because American troops are returning to help us natives. A New York Times article on Jan. 16, written by Eric Schmitt, describes the deployment as "the first major expansion of the war on terrorism." We learn that 650 Americans are coming in "to train and advise 1,200 Philippine Army soldiers in how to destroy Abu Sayyaf, a terrorist group that is holding hostages, including two Americans." That's one American for every two Filipino soldiers, with the New York Times quoting a senior US military official as saying that the number of American forces could increase, depending on how the campaign progresses.

Further, in the article, American readers learn that for several months now, about 5,000 Filipino troops have been fighting the Abu Sayyaf, estimated to be "as many as 2,000." (An article in the British newspaper Guardian puts the figures at 8,000 Filipino troops fighting 500 Abu Sayyaf troops.) The subtext in these figures is clear: Filipinos aren't able to fight the Abu Sayyaf on their own.

The main opposition against the entry of US troops has centered on its violation of Philippine sovereignty, a point that is well made. But I would go further and oppose the entry of US troops on grounds that it will not solve the problem of terrorism in Mindanao; in fact, I fear it may aggravate and prolong the conflicts.

Public opinion polls show that there is overwhelming support from Filipinos for the entry of the Americans. I don't think this grows out of a lack of a sense of sovereignty; rather, it comes from a country weary of the Mindanao conflict. With America's perceived success in Afghanistan, we believe the *Kano* will liberate us from the clutches of the Abu Sayyaf.

Such hopes hinge on the presumption that America has been successful in its war against terrorism in Afghanistan. It has not, and the American military itself has repeatedly confirmed that. They have toppled the Taliban but the al-Qaida network remains intact.

What can we expect in Basilan? Mainly a show of force. Some of this will come from ground patrols, the mere sight of burly *Kano* soldiers marching with their little brown brothers probably intended to intimidate the bad, bad Abu Sayyaf. We know, too, from the way America has been fighting its wars lately, that ground combat is unlikely and that there will be more of fierce displays of aerial firepower.

We should have learned by now that a military campaign will not solve the "Muslim problem," of which the Abu Sayyaf is only a small part. In the 1970s, Marcos launched numerous search and destroy operations in Mindanao, one that included razing Jolo to the ground. All those operations did was to create more discontent, the refugee centers becoming incubators for new generations of secessionists—and the Abu Sayyaf.

So why are the American and Philippine governments pouring so much military resources into Basilan? Even US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz tells the New York Times that if they succeed in clearing Basilan of the Abu Sayyaf, this would be "a small blow against an extended al-Qaida network."

We go back again to our enduring ties. The US is reluctant to get into Iran, or Iraq, or Indonesia, where they could deal greater blows against the al-Qaida. Little victories on friendlier terrain (read client states) like the Philippines are more important at this point for the Bush administration's ratings. That could include rescuing the two American hostages.

Keep in mind, too, that the enduring ties between the Philippines and the United States extend, rather eerily, to the two countries' presidents. Both Dubya Bush and Tita Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took office on the same day a year ago, both had lackluster performances during their first few months as Presidents, and both are anxious to gain *pogi* points for the next presidential elections, scheduled in 2004 for both the US and the Philippines.

Bush needs to keep his macho image, continuing a war he started. Tita Gloria, too, needs to build up her *macha* image, the Iron Lady of Asia. Erap, after all, was popular in Mindanao because of his hard-line stand against the Muslims. The convergence of vested interests and enduring ties could not have been more fortuitous for the politicians, and fateful for the two countries.

LETTERS

A romance story gone sour

A YEAR after the change in the presidency, the truth stares us in the face: The more things change, the more they remain the same.

What gives? A foreign critic says that "Filipinos have a damaged culture." An ex-spy chief refers to the county as a "soft state." The final answer is that we ourselves are the weakest link. Is this goodbye?

The crab mentality is pervasive. Beyond pulling each other down, this aberration signals to the "successor generation" that no matter how brilliant our plans are, there are people who ignore the silver lining and only see the dark side. What is there to inherit?

The government is being assaulted in many fronts. Some of the attacks are deserved, but others are plain muckraking. For example, must there even be a debate about employment figures? The truth is out there. Many workers are losing their jobs. Companies are closing. After Sept. 11, the world has shrunk economically. Demand is down. Investor confidence is low. Yet, we see national and local leaders serving parochial interests or looking only after their own interests. They promote causes that lead to national schisms. Is this the price of free enterprise or democracy?

A year ago, I thought Edsa II would compel us to live by the rules. I thought we would learn that unless we put up a united front and speak with one voice so that we become competitive and grow, we would all lose.

The quality of debate now has deteriorated. Labels are hurled instead of an alternative agenda being put forward. Although we have removed two heads of state through popular mass uprising, we seem to be unable to pick up the pieces. In fact, people power for all its supposed revolutionary flavor is but a romance story gone sour. The honeymoon is over.

Let's stop pulling each other down. Let's buckle down to work. Let's think positive. Above all, let's love the Philippines more. Only this is real people power!—**HERNANI P. GERONIMO, 2263 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City**

Pateros bridge also a public market

IN ALL of Metro Manila, and perhaps even in the entire Philippines, one can find only one bridge (known as Pateros bridge) doubling as a public market. This bridge is a two-lane structure which town officials have been planning to expand with the addition of a third lane. But this plan has never been implemented.

There is always pandemonium on this bridge, especially in the morning because so many people do their marketing there. Crossing the bridge has become a problem to the people of Pateros and the adjacent town of Taguig. Daily they have to contend with the heavy traffic as they go to their places of work or business, which means delay and loss of man hours or business prospects. Commuters risk life and limb since they have to walk close to the vehicles when they go over the bridge.

The past and present mayors of Pateros, both surnamed Capco (being brothers), and even Rep. Allan Cayetano who has jurisdiction over the towns of Pateros and Taguig, do not seem to mind the problem even though they pass through this bridge every now and then. Their apathy and negligence, and their uncaring attitude are truly lamentable.

We really marvel at the patience and endurance of the people living in Pateros. They seem to tolerate the ineptitude and inaction of their town officials.

As residents of Taguig, we are likewise affected by this problem. We strongly appeal therefore, to the congressman who belongs to the majority party and who has a gargantuan pork barrel to take the necessary steps to solve this problem.—**AUGUSTO VALDUESA, Barrio Tipas, Tagig, Metro Manila**

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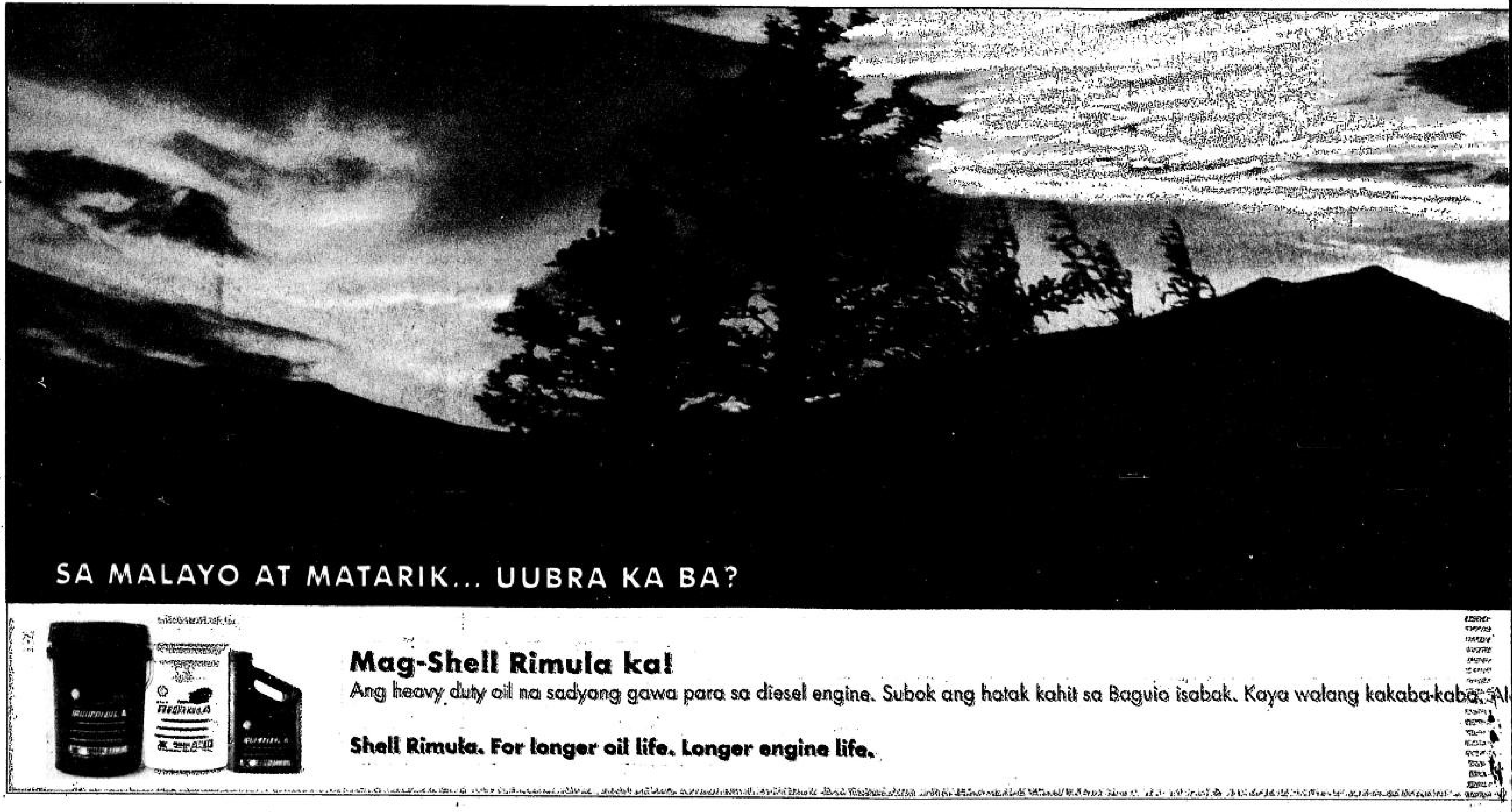
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Lacson urges Gloria to dismiss Corpus

SEN. Panfilo Lacson yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to fire Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces, if she wants genuine reconciliation with the political opposition.

Lacson, who has been the target of police and congressional investigations based on intelligence reports from Corpus, said Ms Macapagal would be taking a "big step forward" toward political reconciliation if she did what he asked.

Lacson's call followed the arrest of an Indonesian national, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, alias Abu Saad, who reportedly admitted during interrogation of having participated in the Dec. 30, 2000 bombings in Metro Manila that claimed more than a dozen lives and left scores injured.

Corpus had tried to link Lacson to the Dec. 30 bombings after Navy Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor, a former Lacson subordinate in the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, was placed on technical arrest following the seizure of a cache of explosives from one of Miraflor's men.

Lacson claimed that Corpus' other accusations against him, such as his alleged involvement in drug trafficking, kidnapping and money laundering, have "boomeranged" on the Isafp chief.

He cited the case of Ador Mawanay, a witness presented by Corpus to testify on Lacson's alleged kidnapping and money-laundering activities, who has been expelled from the government's Witness Protection Program.

Lacson said it was "unfortunate" that the President took Corpus' allegations "hook, line and sinker."

He said the "hate campaign" against him would continue so long as Corpus remains as intelligence chief.

The senator said the first move for "a true healing process" to come about should come from the administration, with the President and her aides observing a moratorium on "tirades" against the political opposition. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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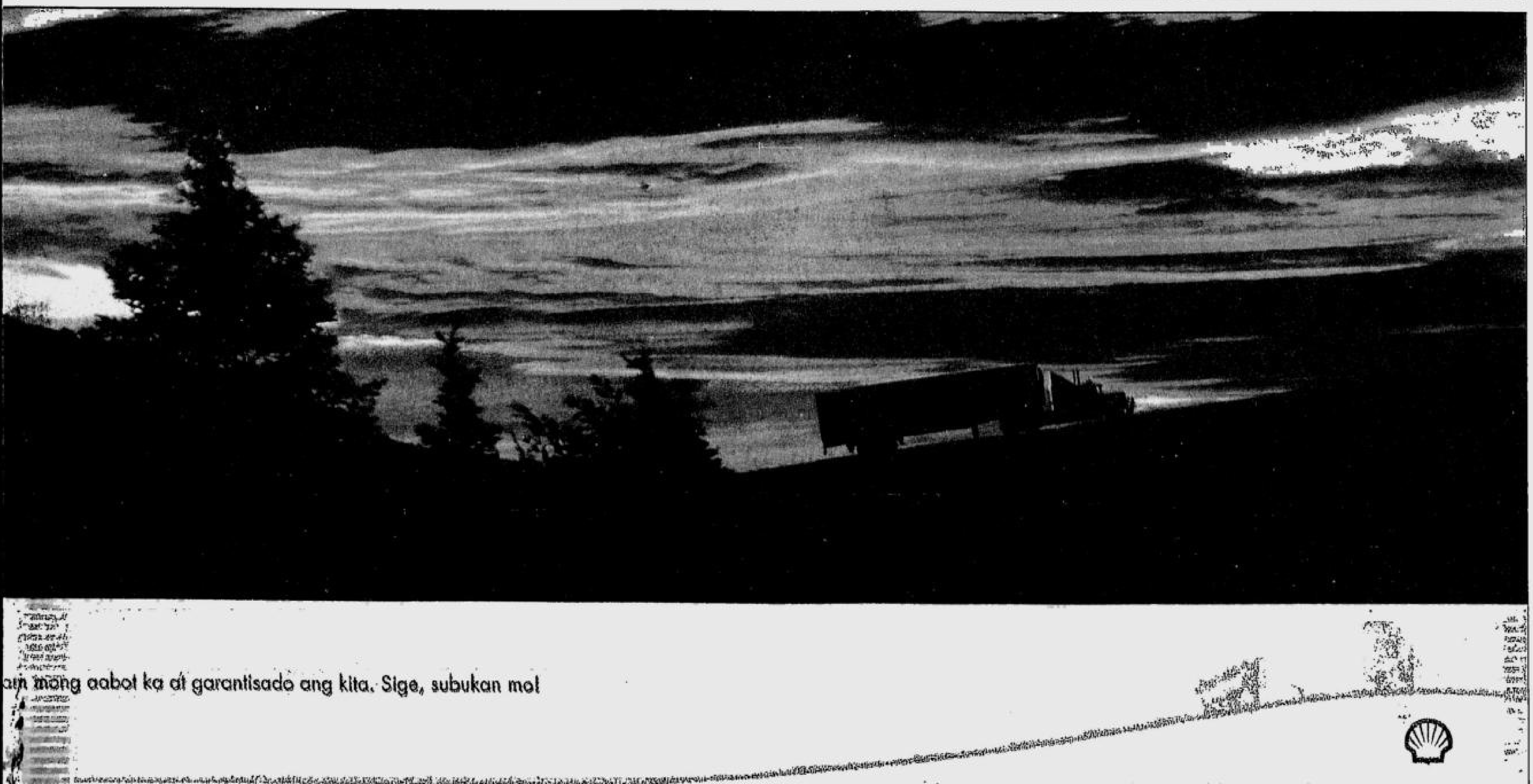

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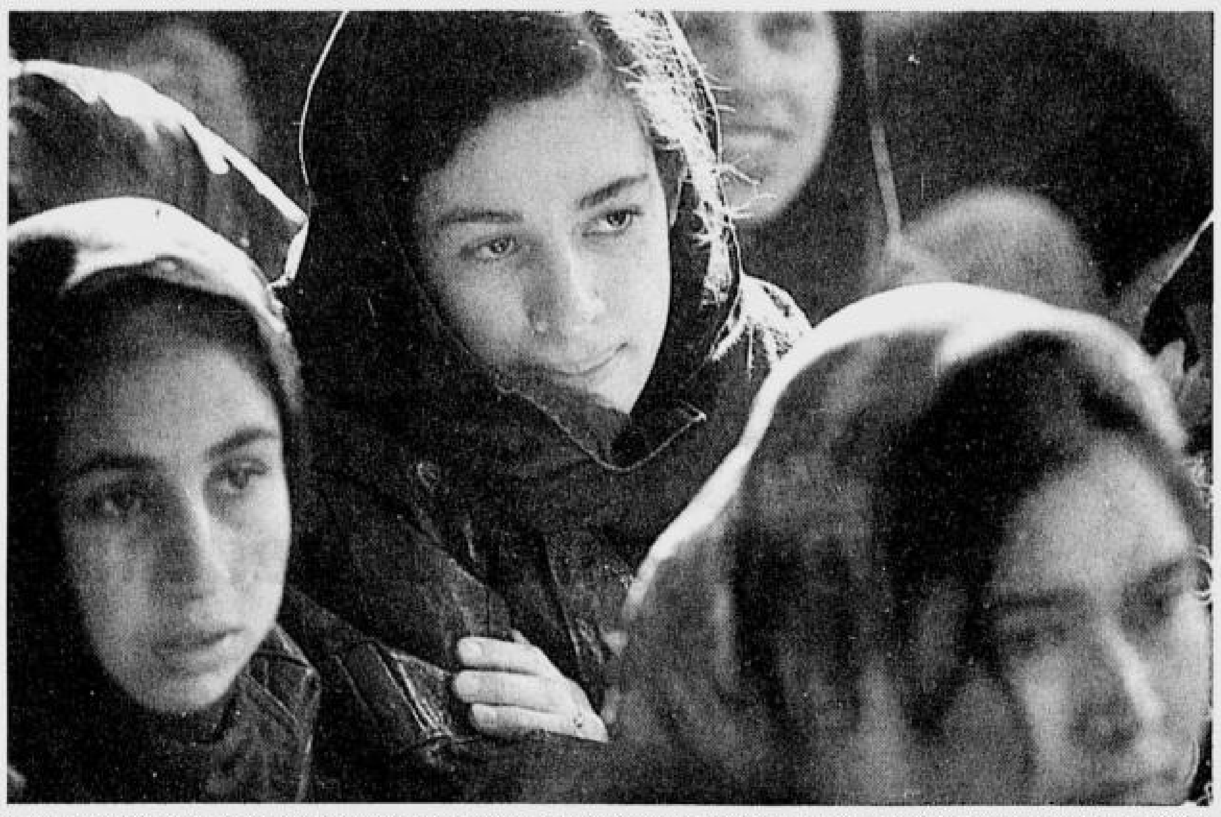


SIXTEEN-year-old Piwashra (center) listens to her teacher at Halfat high school, which has some 500 students in Kabul, Jan. 19. Almost all children throughout Afghanistan did not get any education during the Taliban's five-year rule in the country. AFP

TOKYO—World leaders yesterday pledged more than $1 billion at an international donors conference here to help rebuild war-torn Afghanistan, brought to the brink of bankruptcy.

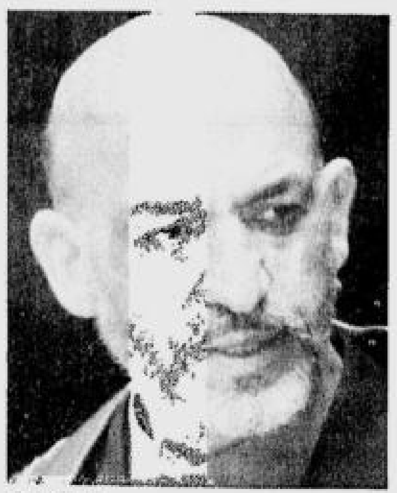
Meeting in Tokyo in a bid to stop Afghanistan lurching back to chaos, Japan, the United States and Europe promised to give a total of about $1.05 billion in 2002, and more in the years ahead.

The figure looked set to match or beat the total of $1.3 billion that, according to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Afghanistan needs "right now to cover its immediate needs."

But interim Afghan leader Hamid Karzai also urged international donors to take action on the ground to help his country, which after two decades of war now has a fighting chance of peace.

"We estimate our expenses to be between $1.8 and $2 billion for our next fiscal year, and ask for a fund to provide resources directly to our budget process," Karzai told delegates from more than 50 countries.

He also asked the world to forgive debts run up by Afghanistan's previous regimes, including the Taliban fundamentalist rulers who were driven out last month, as his near-bankrupt administration struggles for funds.



KARZAI

The European Union said it would stump up 550 million euros ($495 million) for this year, rising to one billion euros over the next five years depending on member states' contributions.

External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten said Europe would also show its long-term commitment to the Afghan people by opening a representative office in Kabul next month.

"We must not lose sight of our objective—to build a better Afghanistan, an Afghanistan free from terror, social injustice and exclusion, and warlordism," Patten said.

Over the decades of Soviet occupation, Taliban rule and warlord infighting, Afghanistan's infrastructure has been ravaged, schools, hospitals and telecommunications decimated.

Millions of the country's 16 million people have become refugees, escaping fighting, drought and poverty.

Conference hosts Japan pledged $250 million this year and up to $500 million over the next two and a half years.

The United States said it would contribute $296.75 million in the coming year.

"The United States will not abandon the people of Afghanistan and we in the international community must not fail them," US Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Tokyo meeting. *AFP*

Malaysia to spend 'billions' on railway

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia will spend "billions" on a high speed electrified railway linking it to Singapore in the south and Thailand in the north, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Monday.

The track would be part of an ambitious pan-Asia link which is also expected to boost efforts to make Malaysia a regional shipping hub.

Mahathir was speaking at the opening of a link project, which cost $131 million, stretching 31.5 km from Kulai in Johor state to the Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP).

Even though the whole scheme would cost "billions of ringgit," it would be a good investment and contribute toward developing the economy, he was quoted as saying by the official Bernama news agency.

"It will take some time to complete and will incur a huge cost but I think it is a wise investment."

Mahathir said once the electric rail project was completed, travelling time between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore would take about two hours 30 minutes compared to about seven hours now.

At present a slow rail system constructed during British colonial days and managed by national railway firm Keretapi Tanah Melayu plys the two points and is often plagued by derailment. *AFP*

Enron failed on business merits, says Andersen

WASHINGTON—The head of accounting giant Arthur Andersen, under fire as auditor of bankrupted Enron Corp., sought on Sunday to cast the company's spectacular collapse as the consequence of a failed business model rather than a result of illegal practices.

"To my knowledge, there was nothing that we've found that was illegal," Andersen Chief Executive Joseph Berardino said on NBC's "Meet the Press" current affairs program.

"This is a company whose business model failed. The accounting reflects the results of business activities. And the way these events were being accounted for were clear to management and to the board.

"But at its base, this is an economic failure," he added.

Berardino also denied that problems at Enron, coming on the heels of accounting controversies involving other large clients, put Andersen's survival at risk. "I don't think we're finished at all. We're meeting with our clients," he said.

Enron, the Houston-based energy trading company with ties to US President George W. Bush and other Republicans, was once a darling of Wall Street with a soaring stock price and a future made bright by the promise of energy deregulation.

But the company faltered last year and collapsed in the biggest bankruptcy filing in US history, wiping out the life savings of many workers while senior executives reaped huge profits by selling shares. *Reuters*

US 'good guests,' get no eviction notice from Saudi–Powell

TOKYO—US Secretary of State Colin Powell, insisting that American forces in Saudi Arabia are good guests, said Sunday he is not aware of any popular pressure in the kingdom for US forces to withdraw.

"We have not been handed any eviction notice or given warning of an eviction notice coming from the Saudi government," Powell told "Fox News Sunday."

Powell sought once again the discredit a published report that Saudi Arabia's rulers may soon ask the United States to pull out its forces.

"I think we are good guests. We are there as part of a collective defense agreement," Powell said on ABC News, adding that he believes US forces there are welcome.

Powell is in Tokyo to attend an international conference on reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan.

In an interview with Japan's NHK TV network, Powell expressed hope that the 60 nations in attendance will contribute generously so that the new government in Afghanistan can begin "getting the country back up and running."

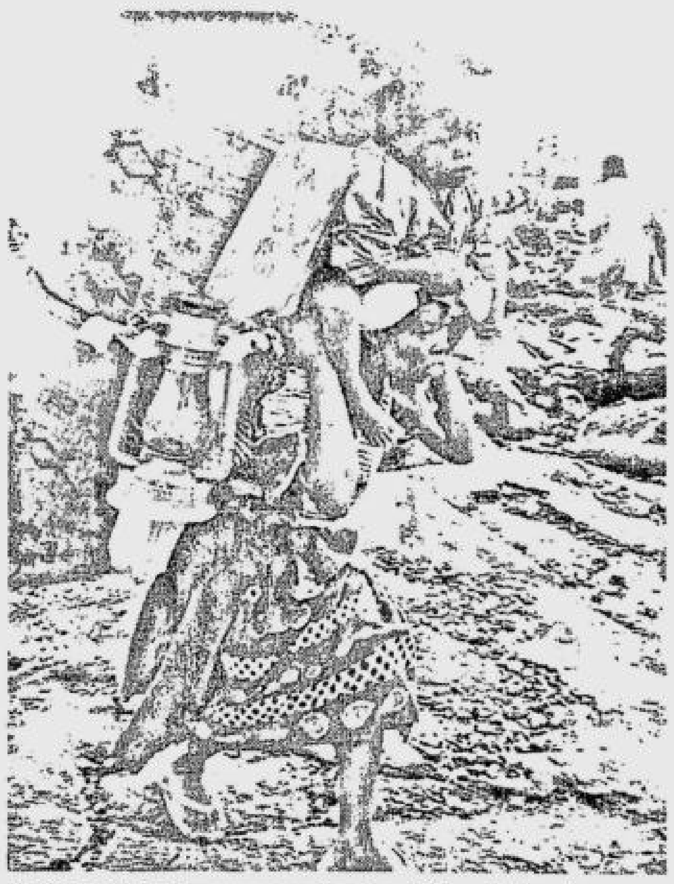
Powell has promised a significant US contribution. He is on the last leg of a five-nation Asia tour and will return home Monday.

The report on Saudi uneasiness with the US presence quoted an unnamed senior Saudi official as saying that Saudi rulers believe the United States has stayed too long.

Powell said Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld reviews the US troop presence in Saudi Arabia and other countries to ensure a minimum of intrusiveness.

"We try not to be a problem to any of the countries in which we have our troops, and for that reason I think we are welcome," Powell said.

He added that the United States has "no interest in keeping forces there beyond the need for those forces, and we shouldn't impose on the government beyond the absolute minimum that we have." *AP*



A CONGOLESE woman carrying her child and belongings runs on hot lava from Nyiragongo volcano in Goma town in the Democratic Republic of Congo Jan. 20. The volcano near Goma in eastern DRC erupted Jan. 17, killing more than 45 people and sending thousands of others fleeing into neighboring Rwanda. REUTERS

Aid for Congo volcano victims in disarray

GOMA, Congo—Aid plans for up to half a million Congolese left homeless and hungry by a volcanic eruption were in disarray on Monday as most refugees returned to their ruined town to try and salvage homes amid the rubble.

Ignoring the risk of further eruptions, tens of thousands of people streamed back into Goma on Sunday, picking their way across swathes of still steaming lava to see what remained of their houses since a cascade of molten rock swept through the town on Thursday.

Aid agencies said the unexpected mass return to the lakeside port of Goma had turned plans for food and water distribution on their head.

"It seems that nearly all the displaced people have returned to Goma," Alison Preston of the World Vision agency said.

"That has produced a whole new crisis, because we have half a million people returning to only a fraction of what Goma used to be. There is massive overcrowding, the streets were just thick with people."

Relief workers had hoped to assemble most of the refugees in designated camps across the Rwandan border, where they said aid distribution would be easier and safer. *Reuters*

Taiwan has new premier

TAIPEI—Presidential secretary general Yu Shyi-kun was Monday named Taiwan's new premier in a major Cabinet reshuffle ahead of the inauguration of a new parliament.

"I announce here that the mission and burden shouldered by Chang Chun-hsiung are now handed over to presidential secretary general Yu Shyi-kun," President Chen Shui-bian said.

The Cabinet lineup would be announced by the new premier, he said.

Chen from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) said the reshuffle would meet new challenges and people's expectations after the legislature opens on Feb. 1.

"The territories of the ruling and opposition parties in parliament as well as Taiwan's future political development will enter a new epoch," he said.

The DPP became the largest party in the legislature in the December elections, garnering 87 seats, or 39 percent, of the total 225. The main opposition Kuomintang lost its slim majority, winning only 68 seats.

"A more balanced scenario has laid down a base for positive interaction and rational negotiations between ruling and opposition groups," Chen said. *AFP*

Border recognition seen as solution to Kashmir row

NEW DELHI—The only solution to India and Pakistan's bitter dispute over Kashmir is to convert the disputed Line of Control (LoC) dividing the region into the permanent border, the chief minister of Indian Kashmir was quoted as saying Monday.

"The ultimate solution to the Kashmir problem is to accept the LoC as the border," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah as telling a seminar in the Indian capital late Sunday.

Abdullah said Indian and Pakistani leaders had verbally agreed to convert the LoC into an international border at a meeting in the northern Indian town of Shimla in 1972, but the move had never been implemented.

He said he had suggested to both Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan's president Gen. Pervez Musharraf a "new path" to solve the Kashmir dispute.

"We (India) keep what part (of Kashmir) we have and they (Pakistan) keep the part they have."

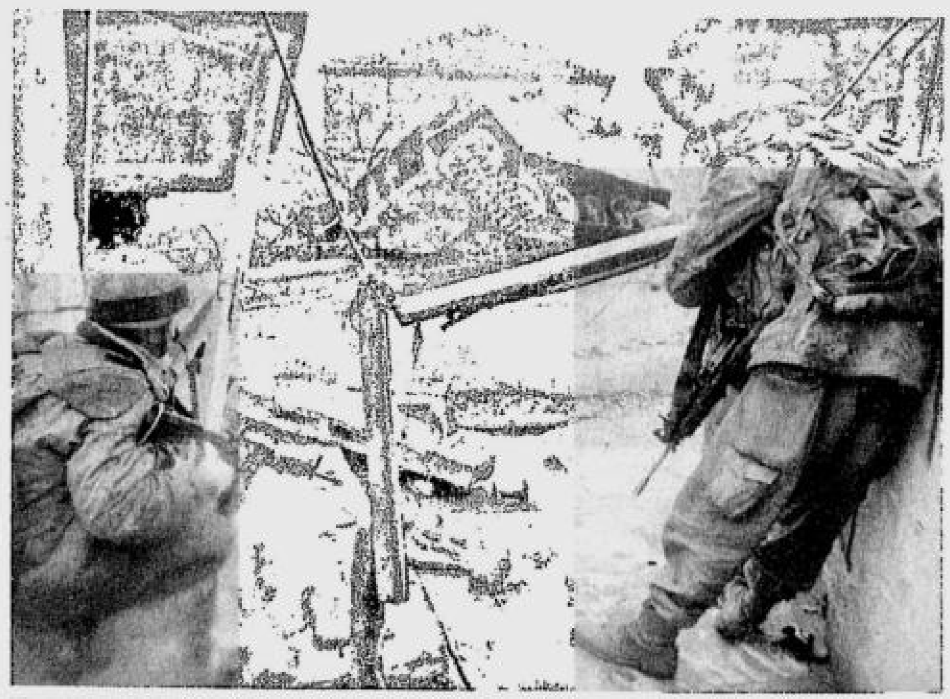
India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the disputed region since their independence from British rule in 1947.

Relations between the South Asian rivals plummeted last month following an attack on India's parliament complex by five gunmen who New Delhi says were Pakistani nationals and members of two rebel groups battling New Delhi's rule in Kashmir.

India accuses Pakistan of arming, training and funding a Muslim separatist insurgency Indian Kashmir which has claimed at least 35,000 lives since 1989.

Islamabad denies the charge but extends open moral, political and diplomatic support to what it terms the right of self determination of the people of Kashmir.

New Delhi has been resisting pressure from a number of countries including the United States to begin a dialogue with Pakistan to thaw frozen ties. *AFP*



ISRAELI soldiers take position during an exchange of fire with Palestinian gunmen next to a crashed tank in the West Bank City of Ramallah Jan. 20. REUTERS

Palestinians battle Israelis in West Bank

GAZA—Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank battled Israeli troops on Sunday while thousands protested in the Gaza Strip in support of President Yasser Arafat, blockaded for weeks at his Ramallah headquarters.

The unrest followed a deadly Palestinian shooting attack inside Israel and a series of Israeli retaliations, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell said had set back efforts to end nearly 16 months of bloodshed.

"We haven't been able to get this moving on track because of the continued violence," Powell told ABC television, referring to mediation efforts led by US peace envoy Anthony Zinni.

"Gen. Zinni has been to the region twice and I hope he will be able to go back again when conditions permit him to."

At least 809 Palestinians and 246 Israelis have been killed since the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule broke out in September 2000 shortly after peace talks stalled.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah, where Israel tightened a ring of tanks on roads leading to Arafat's offices, Israeli soldiers exchanged fire with Palestinian gunmen. Eight Palestinians were wounded by shrapnel, hospital sources said.

"How can this be tolerated by the international community?" Arafat said in an interview with Newsweek, speaking about the nearby tanks.

Israel left Arafat stranded in Ramallah and destroyed his helicopters in December after a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings. The Palestinian leader then declared a ceasefire under intense international pressure.

US and European scrutiny of Arafat has also grown this month since Israel seized a ship it said was smuggling 50 tons of Iranian-made weapons for the Palestinian Authority. *Reuters*

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 21°
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 25° Lo 14°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 19°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 22°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 19°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 22°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 25°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 22°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/01/22/02

ROUNDUP

Town exec slain in ambush

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—The planning and development officer of this town was killed in an ambush in Barangay San Jose Patag here on Friday. Police identified the victim as Apolinario Roxas, 46. Reports said Roxas was on his way home aboard his Honda Civic when the attackers, who were aboard two motorcycles, blocked his path and shot him. Roxas died while being taken to the district hospital here. Police recovered 25 spent shells of .45 cal. pistols from the crime scene.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

New fish port in Malolos

MALOLOS, Bulacan—The Philippine Fisheries Development Authority and local officials expressed optimism that the newly renovated fish port here will boost the coastal town's fish industry. Mayor Danilo Domingo said the P2-million Panasahan fish port, which was opened on Jan. 16, can now accommodate the trade of products from fishermen and fish pond operators in Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan. Domingo said the port is expected to generate at least P5 million in transactions a week.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Cops arrest pusher

LUCENA CITY—Police arrested a drug pusher in a buy-bust operation in Purok Kamagong, Barangay 9, Friday evening. Supt. Danny Ramon Siongco, Lucena police chief, identified the suspect as Rhoderick Viyar, 32, of this city; and Norman Aldovino, alias "Madman," who allegedly belongs to Viyar's network of pushers that supplies illegal drugs to Tayabas, Sariaya and Pagbilao towns. Recovered during the operation were 11 plastic sachets of high-grade methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), two portable weighing scales and repacking paraphernalia.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Elderly killed by train

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—A speeding Manila-bound commuter train hit an elderly man on Sunday in a barangay here. The man was pronounced dead at the nearby Jose Rizal Memorial Hospital. SPO1 Arnel Carandang, police investigator, identified the victim as Monte Virgilio, 61, married, of this town. Carandang said Virgilio was walking across the railway along Barangay Timugan when the train hit him in the shoulder and face.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Village head killed

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—A barangay chair was shot dead by at least four suspected New People's Army rebels while he was presiding over a council session last week in Barangay Don Juan Vercelos, San Francisco town, Quezon. Police said the assailants suddenly entered the village hall and without provocation, shot Renato Edaño, 37, in the face. The victim died on the spot. Police recovered leaflets at the crime scene identifying the killers as members of the NPA's Teresa de Leon Command operating in the Bondoc Peninsula.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Bloodletting project

LUCENA CITY—A multisectoral bloodletting project called "Dugo Ko, Buhay Mo" was able to collect some 18,500 cubic centimeters of blood from members of the local media, Rotary Club of Lucena, Kabalikat Radio Group, Quezon police and the Army's 1st Infantry Battalion. The blood donation campaign coincided with the first media-police-military fellowship sponsored by Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, head of the Southern Luzon Command, and the provincial police's celebration of Police Community Relations Month.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ex-cop shot dead

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—A former policeman in the island-town of Polillio was gunned down on Friday night by at least three unidentified men believed to be New People's Army members. Police identified the victim as Bailon Coralde, 46, of Polillio. Investigators said the victim was playing billiards inside a game parlor in the poblacion when the assailants barged in and shot the victim point-blank in the body. The victim had four fatal bullet wounds.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Teachers' money intact

MATI, Davao Oriental—Public schoolteachers in the province are complaining of the delay in the release of their tax refunds, their longevity pay and refund of excess loan payments. Juan Taloma, schools division superintendent, admitted that the checks have been prepared for release had it not been for a burglary at the DECS division office a few days ago. Taloma assured the teachers that he had already notified the Land Bank of the Philippines about the lost checks.

Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Drying up of 2 Vizcaya rivers alarms governor

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Gov. Rodolfo Agbayani has ordered an investigation of the reported drying up of two rivers in upland Alfonso Castañeda town, whose water flow was believed to have been diverted to supply a nearby hydroelectric power project.

Quoting a report from the Adventures and Expeditions Philippines Inc. (AEPI), Agbayani said a "significant decrease" in the water flow of the Abaca and Demit rivers in Alfonso Castañeda was noted after the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project (CMIPP) started operations last year.

The two rivers, head tributaries of the Casecnan River, have, for years, been venues of whitewater rafting in the region.

The rivers reportedly retained their abundant flow even during the CMIPP's six-year construction.

Inaugurated in October 2001, the CMIPP is a P32.5-billion project that is intended to provide an additional 150 megawatts of electric power and irrigation to an additional 50,000 hectares of riceland in Central Luzon.

Only water from the Casecnan and Taan rivers was supposed to be siphoned through two 30-meter high weirs in Barangay Pelaway.

The water would flow into a 26-km trans-basin tunnel, through a power turbine, and end up in the existing reservoir in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

But diverting water from the Abaca and Demit rivers was contrary to the assurance given by proponents of the CMIPP before its construction, Agbayani said.

"This (incident) is very disturbing because what CP Casecnan told us (during its presentation of the project) was that the water flow in (those rivers) would not be affected," he said.

"I am having this investigated immediately. I have already formed a team to study the (AEPI) report," he added.

"What I'm also concerned about is (its effect on) the water table. It would surely cause the drying up of some springs and brooks downstream (in Quirino)," he said.

"(California Energy officials) said there are other tributaries so that the water flow (going to the Cagayan River) would not be affected," Agbayani said.

"Once this (report) turns out to be true, we would then have to study our options, especially if they don't give us the benefits they promised," he said.

The INQUIRER tried to contact officials of CalEnergy, CMIPP operator, for comment on Sunday, but their offices in Nueva Ecija and Metro Manila were closed.

Early this month, water sports enthusiasts from the AEPI based in Tuguegarao City went to the area supposedly to start off a five-day, 70-km whitewater rafting activity along the Casecnan and Cagayan rivers down to Nagtipunan and Maddela towns in Quirino.

"But when we got there, we found that the water level was too low for rafting," AEPI head Anton Carag Jr. told the INQUIRER. "This is entirely different from the water level the rivers had prior to the operation of the dam."

Quoting local Bugkalot, Carag said the water level was so low that it may eventually dry up during summer.

"When we had rafting activities last year, there were portions of the river that were about 8-foot deep. Now, the deepest part is only about 2 feet," Carag said.

According to Carag, Renato Diaz, presidential assistant for Northern Luzon, has promised to do an aerial survey of the area to verify the reported decrease in river flow.

"After that, he and Governor Agbayani would be discussing this (problem) with officials of CalEnergy," Carag said. ***Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

PROVOKE THE MORO
PP Military Exercise Mindanao

MARAWI RALLY

BUTCH ENERIO

Mostly Muslim protesters burn an American flag in Marawi City during a rally Sunday against the arrival of American troops in Zamboanga and Basilan.

Vigilante killings won't stop

DIGOS CITY—Suspected members of the Digos Death Squad gunned down at least four more persons in a span of three days, bringing the total number of vigilante-related killings in the city to 17 since the middle of last year.

The latest victims were a 34-year-old man and a woman who were shot at close range by motorcycle-riding assassins on Friday.

The DDS, patterned after the Davao Death Squad in Davao City, deploys motorcycle-riding hit men against suspected drug pushers.

The fatalities were identified as Alexander Maglasang, of Purok 8, Balutakay, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur; and Mercy Mesina, 43, of Barangay Kapatagan here.

Mesina's 13-year-old daughter was wounded in the attack.

The victims were in a tricycle from Hagonoy and were bound for this city when the gunmen suddenly appeared at the San Jose Highway and fired at them.

Maglasang jumped out of the tricycle, but the gunmen alighted from their motorcycle and finished him off with more shots.

Police said Maglasang was the apparent target of the gunmen.

Maglasang's wife Jocelyn claimed that she did not know if her husband was engaged in the illegal drugs trade.

On Thursday night, alleged DDS gunmen also attacked three persons on board a motorcycle.

Edilberto Gabuting was killed on the spot while his two companions, Herardo Labra and Ernesto Camus, were seriously wounded.

On Wednesday night, the body of a still unidentified man was found in a remote part of the Davao del Sur Diversion Road here.

The body was riddled with bullets.

An irate Bishop Generoso Camiña of the Diocese of Digos dared Chief Supt. Eduardo Matillano, Southern Mindanao police chief, to act and put a stop to the killings.

He said the police force should not remain complacent with the killings as though "the taking of one's life was tolerated by authorities or approved by the residents." ***Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

2,000 Cafgus end training in E. Visayas

By Cynthia A. Borgueta and Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Army's 8th Infantry Division has recruited close to 2.000 members of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) to help secure public utilities and fight communist rebels in Eastern Visayas.

Capt. Gilbert Roy Ruiz, information officer of the 8th ID based in Camp Lucban, Catbalogan town, Samar, said the 1,988 recruits had just completed their six-month training last Jan. 16 in Eastern Samar.

They would be sent back to their own communities in Western Samar, Northern Samar, Samar, Biliran and Southern Leyte where New People's Army guerrillas are believed to be operating, he added.

Ruiz said the Cafgus were also needed to fill up the vacuum left by the 1,000 soldiers who were sent to Zamboanga and Jolo last December.

The 1,000 soldiers were pulled out from the 803rd Infantry Brigade based in Catarman town, Northern Samar, to reinforce government troops in Zamboanga and Jolo following clashes between government soldiers and supporters of Moro leader Nur Misuari in November.

Records at the Armed Forces' Visayas Command (Viscom) based in Cebu City showed that 656 armed NPA rebels were operating in Eastern Visayas.

Of the number, 436 NPA rebels were said to be operating in the Samar provinces and 220 in the Leyte provinces.

Lt. Col. Michael Manquiquis, Viscom spokesperson, said the NPA rebels operating in Biliran were actually based in Leyte.

"There is also no military unit operating in Biliran," he said. "One requirement of Cafgu (recruitment) is to establish military presence in areas where we lack military troopers."

Manquiquis said the Cafgus would also help secure public utilities and government projects. These include an irrigation system in Eastern Samar and the geothermal power plants in Leyte, he said.

"There might be only 100 NPA (rebels) in one area but there are facilities that we need to secure. We need to put people (there) to help secure these facilities," he said.

The government planned to recruit up to 20,000 militiamen to serve as a first line of defense against bandits and communist and Moro rebels.

But the plan came under fire from leftist groups that accused the government of failing to learn from the lessons of martial law when the Cafgu's predecessor, the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF), was reported to have committed numerous abuses.

Power draws out villagers' 'best'

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

MABINAY, Negros Oriental—It was one of those rare occasions when at least 1,500 residents of two remote villages here could get to wear their best.

The residents showed up in what some of them described as their best clothes to celebrate the fulfillment of a dream they had been nurturing for years—electricity.

"From now on, we will no longer be hearing the sound of frogs and crickets at night. Instead, we will hear (music from) stereo (sets), (radios) and television sets," said Henry Cabusog, Himocdongon barangay chair, during the switch-on ceremony.

At the turn of the switch, 1,508 residents of Barangays Himocdongon, Bugnay, Napasuan, Manlingay and Inapoy, all in the town of Mabinay, were elevated into a new classification—"electricity consumers."

"God granted my desire to have electricity in our barangay," said Terod Sambon, vice president of the Inapoy Barangay Power Association.

Sambon recalled that their community hospital was almost burned down last year because of an unattended candle.

"The morning after, the (Philippine National Oil Co.) came to announce that we would soon have electricity."

The PNOC-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) led the switch-on ceremony.

The project was part of the government's "O, Ilaw" program which seeks to bring electricity to the country's remotest areas.

Sergio Apostol, PNOC-EDC president who led the ceremony, said the PNOC was committed "to provide the gift of light to as many barangays that our resources will allow for the next two to three years in the provinces where we have geothermal projects."

This commitment, he added, is in support of the government's program to reduce, if not eradicate, poverty.

The PNOC-EDC generates 192.5 megawatts of geothermal power from its Negros Oriental operations for the islands of Negros and Cebu. It also operates geothermal power plants in Leyte, North Cotabato, Albay and Sorsogon.

Apostol, however, added that the PNOC planned to energize barangays in Negros Occidental in the next two years, with the operation of the company's 40-mw power project in Bago City in 2004.

Apostol said a total of 386 barangays nationwide were scheduled to enjoy electricity this year.

Of this number, 74 are in Negros Oriental. Although te province is 75 percent energized, there are still 141 barangays remaining in the dark.

"These barangays are our extended family," Apostol said. "We have lived and worked among them for so long that it is only proper that we share in the responsibility of looking after their welfare."

Last year, the PNOC-EDC energized 195 barangays in its various host provinces.

Also attending the switch-on ceremony were Rep. Emilio Macias II, Gov. George Arnaiz and Mabinay Mayor Enozario Baldoza.

Woman heads special court to try Erap; Badoy out

(From page A1)

ber of the third division.

The Supreme Court's ruling was in response to Resolution No. 01-2002 of the Sandiganbayan requesting the creation of a special division to hear the Estrada plunder case.

The resolution, in turn, was in response to the request of the defense panel to re-raffle the plunder case to another division following the forced leave of absence of third division chair Badoy, and the prosecution's opposition to the request.

The plunder case and two other cases accusing Estrada of illegal use of alias and perjury were originally raffled off to the third division in April last year. A second perjury charge is pending against him before the first division.

Nazario is the first woman justice named to the anti-graft court and the first woman to serve as division chair there—a distinction for which she received a "Filipina First Award" in the 1998 "Centennial Salute to Filipino Women Firsts in their Field."

MINETA V.CHICO NAZARIO: First woman Sandiganbayan justice in 1993; now the first woman chair of a division.

A product of the University of the Philippines College of Law, Nazario rose up the ranks as judicial assistant and clerk of court in the Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan. She also taught law in the Perpetual College of Rizal in the 1990s.

Lack of quorum

The Supreme Court saw the need to create a special court for the Estrada cases when the third division was stalled by a lack of quorum starting last December.

At that time, one of the member justices, Ricardo Ilarde, retired, and Badoy was compelled to go on an indefinite leave because of a pending administrative case filed by Estrada's lawyers with the high court.

The plunder trial has since continued under the third division with De Castro as acting chair, albeit with two justices from the fourth division—Narciso Nario and Nicodemo Ferrer—sitting in as substitutes.

At 2 p.m. yesterday, the third division still managed to open what turned out to be its last hearing of the plunder trial. But proceedings were cut short after about 10 minutes when it was informed of the Supreme Court resolution creating the special division.

The plunder case has had a total of 19 hearings since Oct. 1.

State prosecutors led by Ombudsman Aniano Desierto have so far presented only three witnesses in connection with Estrada's alleged P189.7-million commission from the sale of Belle Corp. shares to the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System in October 1999.

It is not known whether the three justices of the special division would concentrate on the Estrada cases and hold in abeyance the other cases in their respective divisions.

The new trial schedule of the Estrada cases is yet to be announced.

Agence France Presse quoted unnamed sources in the Supreme Court as saying that the special division would be dissolved once it had handed down verdicts in the Estrada cases.

Most familiar

Prior to his Sandiganbayan appointment in 1996, Sandoval was a regional trial court justice in Manila and earlier in Pinamalayan, Mindoro Oriental. He was named outstanding Manila RTC judge for three consecutive years, from 1991 to 1994.

De Castro, a UP political science graduate (*cum laude*) who was in the top four of her law class, earlier worked with the Marcos-era Ministry of Justice, and became a board member of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority during the Ramos administration.

Of the three justices, De Castro is the one most familiar with the Estrada cases, being a holdover from the third division.

But Estrada lawyer Jose Flaminiano said in an interview yesterday that the defense panel would likely oppose De Castro's inclusion in the special division.

This is because the defense has a pending administrative case and petition for inhibition against De Castro at the high court, Flaminiano said.

State Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio expressed satisfaction with the special division's lineup, particularly because none of the three justices is retiring in the next few years—a factor deemed to ensure the continuity of the landmark trial.

With dispatch

In the seven-page decision written by Associate Justice Josue Bellosillo and concurred in by Chief Justice Hilario Davide and all the other justices, the Supreme Court mandated the special division "to hear, try and decide with dispatch the plunder case" against Estrada.

In assigning the three justices to the special division, the tribunal barred the Sandiganbayan's lone Estrada appointee—Associate Justice Ma. Cristina Cortez-Estrada—from hearing the case.

It also did not consider the justices retiring within the next three years. Justices Badoy, Ferrer, Nario and Catalino Castañeda are all due for retirement this year, and Rodolfo Palattao in 2003.

Justices Godofredo Legaspi, Gregory Ong and Raoul Victorino have expressed their preference not to be assigned to the special division in view of their close relationship and association with the accused and their families.

Justice Francisco Villaruz is "a very recent appointee," while Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena is devoting himself exclusively to decision writing.

"Thus, we are left with hardly any choice but to designate (Nazario, Sandoval and De Castro) as members of the special division to try and decide the plunder case," the Supreme Court said. ***With an AFP report***

RP-US deal signed by AFP chief

(From page A1)

ing)," the official said.

The official added that Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. was bypassed when Villanueva was made the signatory of the Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement. Guingona co-chairs the RP-US Mutual Defense Council with US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Admiral Dennis Blair, the commander in chief of the US Pacific Command, reportedly signed for the United States.

The official's revelations will likely add more fuel to the fire over the deployment of US troops in Basilan island and the reported new pact.

In the Senate, the principal author of the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement said US engagement in pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf is not covered by the VFA. If such activity were part of the joint operations under the "Balikatan" war games, Sen. Blas Ople said, it must be stopped.

For the US military to join combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf, a new treaty is required, Ople said. It is a treaty which the Senate must reject, he added.

Ople is chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations.

In the House, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos detailed the contents of an alleged draft of the "Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement, RP-US-01 between the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines and the Department of Defense of the United States of America."

She charged that the draft MLSA illegally contained a clause on appropriation, which only Congress can initiate.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said that the committees on defense and foreign relations would tackle the twin resolutions to investigate the ongoing RP-US military exercises tomorrow.

Bipartisan approach

"The joint hearing is a bipartisan approach to clear the air amid legal concerns raised by some quarters," Drilon said. "After this hearing, we will know the real score on the matter."

Drilon said the joint hearing would seek to determine whether the "Balikatan" military exercises in Basilan and Zamboanga were being conducted in accordance with the Constitution and the Visiting Forces Agreement.

He said that top security and foreign affairs officials of the Macapagal administration had been invited to brief the senators on the legal parameters of the exercises, the scope of the involvement of US troops and other questions on sovereignty and security.

The officials include Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, AFP Chief Villanueva, former Senate President Jovito Salonga and ex-Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

But in his privilege speech, Ople said that administration officials, including the President, had been speaking in discordant voices on the issue. He warned the government against contemplating another treaty that would cover the participation of American soldiers in any anti-insurgency campaign.

"If it is part of the joint military operations, then this violates the Constitution per se and therefore will be rejected by the Senate if it comes to us in any form," he said.

Sen. Edgardo Angara said it was not necessary for the government to "put more clothing" on every joint RP-US military operation.

Angara said the government must be truthful to the people on the real nature of the American presence here.

He cited a US report which quoted the Pentagon on the dispatch of additional American troops here, including an arrangement that would allow them to join pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf and the right to fire back when fired upon.

"Why is our own government not leveling with us?" he asked.

Drilon promised to relay to the President the request of minority senators for a presidential briefing on US military presence in the Philippines.

Secret treaty

"Is this draft the secret treaty that so many allege? Has it really been signed by our Department of National Defense? To these, as to many other questions surrounding Philippine-American policy these past months, we have no answers. Why must we be always the last to know?" Marcos said.

The daughter of the country's martial law president said the title seemed to confirm the reported intent to evade the constitutional prohibition on foreign bases and troops.

She cited the definition of support and services in the draft as: billeting, transportation (including airlift), communication services, medical services, base operations support (and construction incident to base operations support)..."

"It shows that this will not be mere equipment exchange but would allow reestablishment of US bases," Marcos said.

She also said the arrangement was one-sided because it excluded most military equipment from being transferred to the Philippines.

But the "ultimate fallibility of the proposed MLSA" was its provision that the reciprocal provision of logistics support, supplies and services would be "in return for either cash payment or . . . reciprocal provisions" and that all obligations of the two parties would be subject to the "availability of appropriations for such purposes."

"Ladies and gentlemen, is this not an appropriation clause, never to be initiated except by this House?" Marcos said.

She said the logistics support, supplies and services would not be offered free of charge by way of grants-in-aid but through reimbursements.

"How do we pay? With what do we pay? Shall we provide the Americans with 200 *kumpits* (small boats) in exchange for aircraft in the anti-terrorism campaign in Basilan?," she asked.

"Shall we requisition as fair exchange value 1,000 Kapampangan girls for R and R (rest and recreation) and logistics services?," she added.

Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada Jr., in his interpellation, queried Marcos whether it was true that the MLSA was signed some four weeks ago during the trip of Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to Hawaii where he met with Blair.

Marcos said "many allege that the DND" had indeed signed the arrangement.

"It also bothers me," Lozada said, adding that the arrangement "does not fall under any rule that would demand Senate ratification."

More opposition

Outside the halls of Congress, opposition to the joint RP-US war exercises continued to widen, as militant fisherfolk asked Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin to denounce the US military build-up in Mindanao, while farmers picketed the US embassy to demand an immediate troop pullout.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakay ng Pilipinas urged Cardinal Sin to issue a strong statement against the "immoral, demonic, evil and blasphemous" joint military exercises. The group branded the RP-US joint military exercises as the "war games of the demons."

More than a thousand farmers led by the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas turned the park in front of the US Embassy into a campsite and called on US President George W. Bush to respect Philippine sovereignty by pulling out American troops in Mindanao.

The farmers who camped and staged a vigil at Plaza Ferguzon came from the Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera regions.

The militant group Sanlakas said the exercises were among the secret deals the President entered into with Bush during her weeklong US visit last November.

Wilson Fortaleza argued that if these exercises are allowed despite violations of the Constitution, the Mutual Defense Treaty and the VFA, "there must be another agreement that we don't know that allows it." ***With a report from Gerald Lacuarta***

Business bullish on GMA gov't

(From page A1)

in the first two weeks of this month.

"The overall optimism with economic prospects reflected strong approval of the economic leadership of President Macapagal and her administration, particularly of her team of economic managers," the MBC said.

Seven of the Top 10 government agencies cited by the respondents were economic departments led by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Department of Finance. The respondents listed the low inflation rate, modest economic growth, stable foreign exchange rate and low interest rates as positive developments during the past six months.

The results showed that 45 of the respondents expected gross domestic product growth to be better than last year, while 32.3 percent felt that the economy would remain flat. A total of 20.6 percent expected the economy to worsen this year.

The January 2001 survey, conducted shortly after the ouster of President Joseph Estrada, had 66 percent of the respondents expecting a better economic outlook. But the July 2001 survey showed a drastic reversal in sentiments when 75 percent of the respondents said they expected the economy to get worse.

The MBC said businessmen's optimism was also manifested in the positive projections in key economic indicators. A total of 46 percent of the respondents foresee inflation to remain the same as last year; 47 percent expect interest rates to be lower this year; 46 percent hope investments to improve from last year; and 42 percent expect exports to rebound this year.

But a majority of respondents or 62 percent said the peso would depreciate by 6 percent. This could be traced to a rise in imports (44 percent expect imports to be higher than last year).

The MBC also noted that the respondents were more optimistic about business prospects. Seventy percent of the respondents said they would maintain their present workforce while 45 percent said they would make additional investments this year (an average of P524 million per respondent).

Despite the difficulties, Philippine businesses remained resilient as capacity utilization remained steady at 71 percent and inventory of raw materials and finished goods was unchanged at two months, according to the MBC.

The businessmen's main cause of concern was the law and order problem, followed by corruption, economic slowdown, the Abu Sayyaf menace, and unemployment.

To solve the peace and order problem, the respondents urged the government to revamp the police and military organizations, enforce the law, seek foreign aid, annihilate the Abu Sayyaf and prosecute erring law enforcers.

Blackout hits Luzon; Napocor head fired

(From page A1)

"When the groundwire fell, it hit the conductors that connected the 230-kilovolt Tayabas-Kalayaan line with the 500-kv Tayabas-Dasmariñas line," Mangila said.

The two transmission lines bring power from generation plants in Southern Luzon to the rest of the island.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr., who visited the site, said last night that the groundwire snapped because a bulldozer in a construction site near the Tayabas substation had most probably rammed one of Napocor's steel towers.

Perez said the blast was the result of two transmission lines coming into contact with each other.

He identified the owner of the bulldozer as Schneider Electric, a subcontractor for an upgrading project on Napocor's transmission lines.

No bulldozer

But an employee of Schneider belied Perez's claim, saying that a bulldozer could not have hit Napocor's steel towers.

Imelda de la Cruz, who claims to be a civil works site supervisor of the French company, told the INQUIRER last night that the tower was inaccessible to bulldozers as this was located in a *libis* (slope of a hill).

De la Cruz also pointed out that there was no bulldozer at the site as the company had pulled it out last week.

Schneider Electric's has a Manila office on Timog Avenue in Quezon City headed by a certain Gil Zulueta, according to De la Cruz.

Perez, nevertheless, said Napocor might charge Schneider Electric for damages worth P10 million for every hour of complete system failure.

But a Napocor official told the INQUIRER that the firm had an option to recoup its losses through insurance claims.

Perez had earlier said in a press briefing that they were looking into the possibility that cable thieves were responsible for outage.

He said thieves sell the materials, which are made of aluminum, to scrap metal buyers.

Alcordo resigned in November, but the President did not accept it.

In October, Alcordo threatened to resign after a row with Winston Garcia, president of the Government Insurance Service System (GSIS).

Alcordo claimed GSIS owed Napocor billions of pesos since it did not shoulder the repairs for the Napocor assets it had insured.

Alcordo had sought a new insurance policy through public bidding.

Napocor put online its hydro, coal and diesel-fired power plants to restore the capacity of the Luzon grid.

By 3 p.m. yesterday, power was restored in parts of Baguio City, Olongapo City, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Laguna, Rizal, Bulacan and Metro Manila.

"This means that power has been restored in (about 17 percent) of all affected areas," Alcordo said.

As of 6 p.m., Napocor had restored about 62 percent of power in Luzon.

Asisclo Gonzaga, Napocor chief operating officer, said they expected full restoration of power by 10 last night.

Where's the coup?

At around 4:30 p.m., more than an hour after power was restored in Malacañang, a relaxed Ms Macapagal told reporters in Filipino: "Power is being restored and there's still no coup."

"Besides, where will they come from? Where are the marchers? There are not too many of them (in the rallies)," she added after viewing an exhibit of photojournalists, who covered her first year in office.

In a separate interview, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez denied they were alarmed by the blackout.

"There was not much problem because we have emergency power," he said.

Golez said the "timing" of the latest blackout was just coincidental.

"Sometimes reality is stranger than fiction," he said.

Despite the absence of a power grab, Reyes said the military organization continued to remain on alert.

"We are always on the alert," he said when asked about troop presence in some areas of Metro Manila and the deployment of two MG-520 attack helicopters in Camp Aguinaldo.

Both military and police units in Metro Manila have been ordered to remain on alert up to Jan. 24 in anticipation of major rallies by anti-administration groups.

About 500 policemen from Central Luzon have been deployed in Metro Manila as reinforcements.

The police force, composed of Regional Mobile Force and Special Action Force units, arrived on Friday and is considered a "standby" force for the Metro Manila police and military units.

'On Nov. 4, Luzon was plunged into a six-hour blackout just as the President was in Brunei for an Asean summit.

Rumors of a coup circulated in the weeks before the blackout.

In the Bicol region, power was restored, but it went out again at about 3:35 p.m. Electric supply resumed at 4:25 p.m.

At least two towns and a city in Laguna province experienced power outages for about an hour while the capital town of Sta. Cruz remained without power as of press time.

Anita Cornista, resident of San Pablo City, said the city was out of power shortly after noontime but electricity was restored after more than 30 minutes.

In Los Baños, power was back at about 2:10 p.m., according to Esther Oro, a resident.

In Northern and Central Luzon, power was restored at about 2:30 p.m. in Baguio City, Benguet, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Ilocos Norte and some parts of Pangasinan.

Clark not affected

Affected by the power outage, that occurred between 1:15 and 1:35 p.m., were Bataan, Bulacan, Tarlac, Pampanga and Zambales. Power in the Clark Special Economic Zone, however, was not cut off.

Power was restored at 3:05 p.m. in Pampanga, Zambales and Bataan.

In Dagupan City, power was restored in eastern Pangasinan covered by the Napocor's North Island grid. The grid includes transmission lines in Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte and La Union.

The power plants in Masinloc, Zambales, and Bauang, La Union, provide additional electricity to these areas.

Power for service areas of the North Island grid comes from the Magat Dam in Isabela and Binga Dam in Benguet, according to Jose Arellano, Napocor district chief in San Manuel, Pangasinan.

In Cabanatuan City, Napoleon Viterbo of Napocor said power supply from the Pantabangan hydroelectric dam made the restoration of electricity in northern Nueva Ecija faster.

The Pantabangan dam supplies at least 100 megawatts of electricity to the Luzon grid. ***With reports from Martin P. Marfil in Manila; Floreño G. Solmirano, Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Yolanda Fuertes and Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Blackout paralyzes MRT, LRT operations

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

DISGRUNTLED commuters made their way down the long flights of stairs of Manila's railways as the Luzon-wide blackout paralyzed operations of the Light Rail Transit and the Edsa Metro Rail Transit-3 yesterday.

Both the LRT and the Edsa MRT-3 do not have emergency power sources that would enable them to continue operations despite power outages. Both railways are connected to the Manila Electric Co.'s main grid.

"We do not have any emergency power supply because this is very costly. The minimum requirement is a 35-megawatt power generator for the trains to be able to run," Mario Miranda, Edsa MRT-3 general manager, said in a telephone interview yesterday.

When the Luzon-wide blackout occurred, LRT and Edsa MRT-3 personnel continued to allow commuters to line up for tickets and wait for the trains to come.

MRT-3 personnel have to wait until either Meralco or the National Power Corp. announces a blackout before they can stop people from going up the railway stations, according to Miranda.

"The problem is, we don't really know when power outages will strike. Our people at the stations don't know when to announce to commuters until they themselves get an announcement of a blackout from either Meralco or Napocor," he said.

Miranda added that it was routine for MRT personnel to first conduct an "internal check because the problem may be with us and not with Meralco or Napocor."

However, he admitted a slight "communication problem" with Meralco. "Sometimes we do not get confirmation of a blackout right away."

For power outages that last a few minutes, Miranda and LRT public relations chief Ma. Ermie Chang said railway personnel would ask commuters to wait for power to be restored.

But in the event that power is not restored right away, railway personnel assist passengers stuck between stations in "evacuating" the stalled railway coaches.

"Train operators are equipped with a turnkey which they can use to open the trains' doors. They then help the passengers disembark and guide them as they walk on the 'catwalks' beside the tracks," Chang said.

The MRT employees are well trained and will not have much trouble guiding stranded passengers to the nearest station and giving refunds to those who have not gotten on the train yet, according to Miranda.

Inquirer policy . . .

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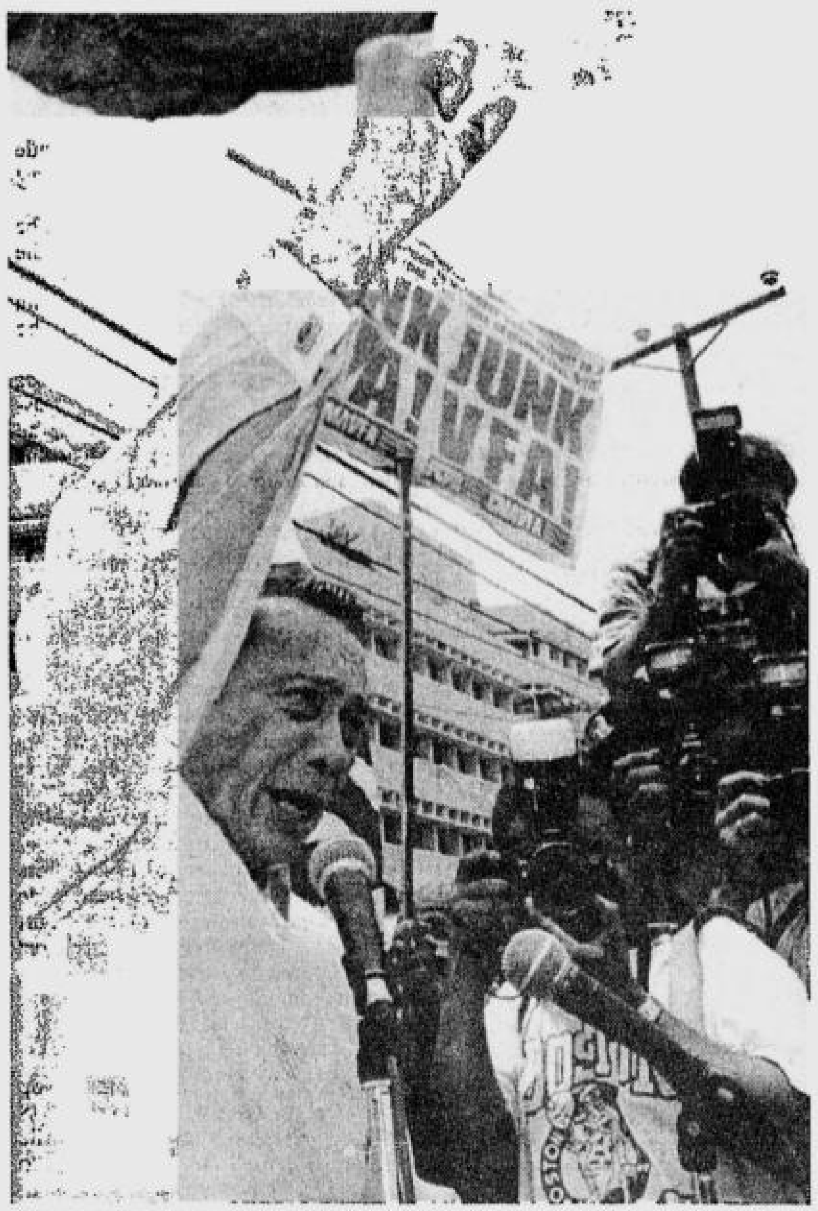
source, the gift shall be donated to a charity under the gift giver's name."

This should clear up whatever confusion that might have been caused by an INQUIRER front page story on Jan. 21 regarding former President Joseph Estrada's cash gift of P50,000 to the INQUIRER.

The second paragraph of the story, "Estrada cash ends up in charity," read: "...per the paper's editorial policy, gifts in cash or in kind with a value of more than P4,000 are to be given to charity in the name of the giver."



GUINGONA: Consistent with his anti-VFA position in the Senate, the senator joined an anti-VFA rally outside the Senate building in May 1999.

Guingona agonizes

(From page A1)

Macapagal administration's first major policy split. The first is the deployment of American troops in the Philippines, about 660 of whom would be advising and training Filipino troops in combat areas in Basilan, within the framework of joint military exercises called "Kalayaan-Aguila 2002."

Guingona said that although the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty allowed joint bilateral exercises for training, they were not intended for combat or for crushing internal rebellions.

This year's exercises mark the first time that the maneuvers will be conducted not against hypothetical enemies but against specific targets—the Abu Sayyaf—and American troops will be deployed in combat zones.

The other issue is the US-proposed Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement (MLSA), which is being negotiated directly between the US and Philippine defense departments. The draft seeks to allow US access to Philippine ports and facilities for weapons and other logistics.

The President's position is that the MLSA is not a treaty but an executive agreement and therefore does not require Senate intervention. But Guingona said that such an important security issue that raises constitutional questions would be more widely accepted if the Senate was brought in.

At a news briefing, however, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said he was confident that all questions regarding the constitutionality of the RP-US military exercises against the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan would be put to rest when the NSC tackled the issue.

"There is no legal impediment against the holding of the Balikatan exercises between our troops and the US forces in Basilan," Perez said.

The Department of Justice has already prepared its official stand on the issue, he added.

Not consulted

Guingona raised his points of objections in a meeting on Jan. 12 with the President, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, and presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao.

In that meeting, the defense department presented a briefing on "Balikatan," which Guingona saw as a "fait accompli."

He had not been previously consulted about it, he said, despite the fact that he sits in the RP-US Mutual Defense Board Council of Ministers together with US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The expanded exercise, which extended the war games to Basilan, was not approved by the council.

The orders for the new exercise came from Ms Macapagal, in accordance with her policy backing the global war on terrorism, and after the Abu Sayyaf had been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network.

The Monday after, Guingona saw the President again, together with Executive Secretary Romulo, to warn her about his concerns over the doubtful constitutionality of the exercises, even if conducted within the framework of the MDT, and the possibility of US forces training with Filipino troops in Basilan being involved in combat.

Last Thursday, he went back to see the President. In these meetings, the question of his resignation did not come up. But in several press interviews, Guingona has hinted at resignation.

Bypassed DFA

The same DFA sources said Malacañang had bypassed the DFA by allowing the American troops to stay for at least a year in the guise of helping the country rid of terrorists without consulting the DFA.

Under the Visiting Forces Agreement, the sources said, the constitutional prohibition applies only to permanent bases and facilities and not to short visits.

"The short visits as allowed by the Constitution are never lasting more than four weeks that the VFA envisions (sic)," one source said.

The Supreme Court promulgation on Oct. 10, 2000 that Section 25, Article 18 of the Constitution does not apply to mere transient agreements for the reason that there is no permanent placing of structure for the establishment of a military base, the sources said.

"On this score, the Constitution makes no distinction between transient and permanent," a source said.

Asked whether Malacañang issued a "gag order" on the issue of the US troop deployment, Guingona said no, but added that the NSC discussion would involve "sensitive issues."

Pressed to elaborate, Guingona said he could "not preempt" the meeting.

Perez also declined to disclose details of the DOJ position. "I could not discuss this with you yet because this would preempt our presentation before the Council," he told reporters.

Aside from the President and Guingona, others expected to attend the meeting tomorrow include former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, the majority and minority leaders in both chambers of Congress and National Security Adviser Roilo Golez. *With reports from Christine Herrera and Norman Bordadora*

'Southeast Asia next haven . . .

(From page A1)

said in defending the deployment of US soldiers for joint training with Filipino troops.

Al-Ghozi also tipped off authorities to one of his alleged Filipino henchmen and contacts, Mohammad Kiram, 31.

Kiram was arrested Monday in Marawi City by police and military intelligence agents, Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta told reporters.

Authorities said Kiram did not resist arrest but repeatedly shouted, "Allahu Akbar (Allah is Great)!"

Mabanta added al-Ghozi had "admitted participation in violent incidents in Mindanao and Metro Manila including the Dec. 30, 2000 bombing" of a Light Rail Transit coach that killed 22 people.

He said 42 US military advisers were already in Zamboanga City preparing logistics for the arrival of other American soldiers taking part in exercises against the Abu Sayyaf, which is holding an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse hostage in Basilan island.

The US troops will not actively engage in combat, but will be allowed to the frontlines as observers, he said.

2 weeks

Maj. Noel Detoyato, spokesperson of the military's Southern Command, said actual training exercises were scheduled to begin in the next two weeks.

US troops, however, will not be allowed to set up permanent bases, presidential adviser on the peace process Eduardo Ermita said.

He was reacting to concerns expressed by leftwing groups that the joint operations with Filipino soldiers would be expanded into a campaign against communist New People's Army, which is on Washington's global "terrorist blacklist."

"We would not allow the situation to spread out (of the main southern island of) Mindanao, much more letting it spread all over the Philippines," Ermita said.

He said the Constitution barred foreign governments from setting up a permanent military bases or facilities in the country.

"That definitely will not happen because that is not allowed in our Constitution," Ermita said, adding the joint training exercise would "address the present crop of terrorists right there in Basilan."

He said he hoped the communist leadership would not use the US deployment as a pretext to pull out of peace talks with Manila. The talks were suspended last year after the NPA assassinated two legislators.

Rumsfeld

In Washington, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld continued Sunday to sidestep the question of whether US troops arriving in the Philippines would engage in combat.

About 600 US troops would take part in the joint training exercise and advise Filipino military forces in their campaign to crush the Abu Sayyaf, Rumsfeld said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Three C-130 aircraft from a US military base in Japan have landed in the Philippines with troops, vehicles and communication equipment.

It is the largest overseas deployment of US soldiers since the military campaign in Afghanistan.

"We are working with the Philippines, shoulder to shoulder, to provide training in a whole host of techniques and things that are appropriate to chasing down terrorists," Rumsfeld said.

Both Manila and Washington have linked the Abu Sayyaf to the al-Qaida terrorist organization.

Asked if the US troops would take part in combat, he said: "It's my understanding that the Philippine Constitution prohibits having combat forces of other nations."

However, Rumsfeld hinted US troops might play an active role in helping to rescue the hostages. "We certainly are anxious to have those missionaries released or recovered," he said.

Manila says the deployment is covered by the Visiting Forces Agreement allowing joint military exercises in the Philippines. The Philippine government has said US troops will be kept back from the frontlines, although they will be armed and allowed to defend themselves if attacked.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the deployment was within the framework of the global campaign against terrorism.

"We have a mission under way in the Philippines which is where apparent terrorist operations associated with Osama bin Laden have been active," Powell told Fox News. ***Reports by Martin P. Marfil in Manila; Buth Enerio, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and AFP***

DENNIS SABANGAN

THE CONSTRUCTION of quarters including a portable toilet for American troops is being rushed inside a military camp in Malugatay, Zamboanga City.

Brownback backs off, says GMA

(From page A1)

pines is going to be next target after Afghanistan on the war on terrorism."

"He's quite apologetic and I told him we have to be very clear about this. From the beginning, I told (US) President (George W.) Bush that the terms of reference is training, and that the American soldiers will not engage in combat," the President told Palace reporters.

President Bush also telephoned her on Saturday night, according to the President but did not disclose much of what they talked about.

"He called me up the other night and he said he's not gonna be in New York," Ms Macapagal said referring to her upcoming trip to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom from Jan. 26-Feb. 6. She will be in New York on Jan. 30.

"So if ever we'll just talk to each other on the phone which we do anyway even if I'm here," the President added laughing.

Ms Macapagal said she informed Brownback that his statement has raised a furor in the country with lawmakers demanding a presidential briefing on the unusual number and movements of US military personnel here ostensibly to participate in the Kalayaan-Aguila 2002 exercises.

Government officials have announced that some 660 US Special Forces and support personnel will be deployed in Basilan, Zamboanga City and Mactan Air Base in Cebu as advisers, trainers and consultants for varied missions including the rescue of Martin and Gracia Burnham.

But Malacañang had stressed that the exercises would be a variation of the annual Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) exercises between Filipino and American troops.

Counterproductive

"I explained to him (Brownback) how his statements, instead of making it easier to rescue his constituents because of the immediate acquisition of new assistance, additional intelligence and new equipment, now we'll have to spend more time clarifying it and therefore that delays the implementation of the training," Ms Macapagal said.

Brownback is the US senator from Kansas, home state of the Burnhams, who are being held hostage along with Filipina nurse Edeborah Yap by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

"So, I said his statements therefore were counterproductive to his purpose," she added.

The President said there was a previous proposal for her and Bush to jointly announce Kalayaan-Aguila 2002 but she decided to announce it earlier.

The training exercise started on Jan. 15.

"I wanted the observation period to start Jan. 15 and if I announced it with President Bush on Jan. 30, let's say it's two weeks after the fact. I said it's more transparent to announce it before Jan. 15," Ms Macapagal explained.

The President said the equipment being brought in by the Americans participating in the war exercises would be on top of the $100-million military assistance she secured from the Bush administration during her US visit last November.

"A lot of what they'll be bringing in for Balikatan will be additional," Ms Macapagal said.

The President also said that the training of two additional Light Reaction Companies in Kalayaan-Aguila 2002 would likewise be an addition to the $100 million US military assistance.

Risk of casualties

Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, said in a radio interview that the Americans could suffer casualties as a result of the exercises.

"American and Philippine authorities know that in every exercise is a percentage of risk of casualties," Ermita said over dzRH.

Ermita said that while US forces "are not totally out of harm's way, there won't be a chance that they will be in combat."

According to him, "accidents" happen in exercises and "before they enter into one, the Americans know it may occur."

Malacañang earlier said that US Special Forces will go down to the level of battalions, and later at company-level in Basilan to advise troops in Basilan.

"There might be accidents in the jungle," Ermita said.

Bar girls welcome GIs

(From page A1)

Emily said in Filipino of the US troops who have arrived for the RP-US Balikatan 2002 war exercise. "There are many condoms around." (The names of Emily and the other women interviewed by the INQUIRER are fictitious.)

Erica said she would demand that her prospective clients present papers certifying that they did not have sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

"Who knows, someone might like me and marry me," she said wistfully.

Erica exemplifies the women who welcome the arrival of the US troops not only in terms of the dollars to be earned.

Karina of the Lagoon bar said she would be happy to have a *mestizo* child.

Emily, 18, a native of Zamboanga Sibugay province and who works as waitress at the Geishio, said: "*OK lang kasi magkaka-papa ako na* GI Joe (At least I'll have a GI lover)."

AIDS-free city

The Human Development Empowerment Services (HDES), a nongovernment organization mainly concerned with prostituted women, has urged them to take precautions in dealing with American soldiers to avoid the spread of STDs, particularly AIDS.

"Zamboanga is an AIDS-free city," said HDES project director Maria Lourdes Lim. "We are afraid that with the coming of these foreign soldiers, this might change."

The HDES started on Thursday a series of dialogues with prostituted women and "high-risk" persons such as waitresses, wherein they were briefed on the importance of the use of condoms.

It also established 24 "access stores" where condoms would be distributed.

Lim said they also urged the women, particularly the "freelancers," to register for easy detection of diseases.

According to a study by the HDES, there are about 2,000 commercial sex workers and high-risk persons in the city, but only about half are registered.

Lim said the HDES would also like to meet with a representative of the US military to discuss measures against the spread of STDs.

"Definitely, these foreign troops will find ways to release their sexual urges, and we have almost 2,000 women—either registered or freelancers—available for that," she said. "So as early as now we have to do something about it."

The HDES is seeking the help of Mayor Ma. Clara Lobregat to arrange the meeting.

Getting pregnant

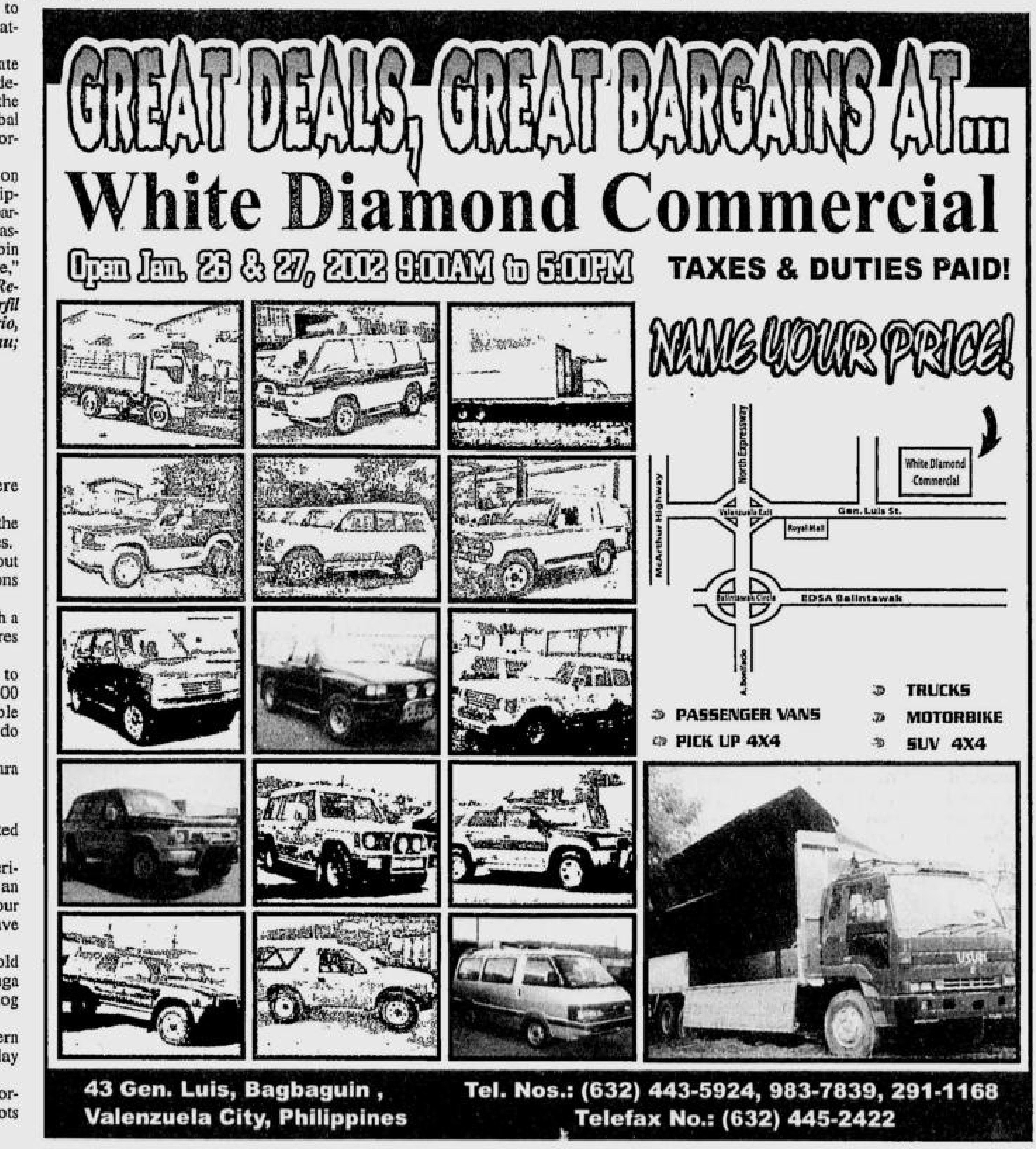
Dr. Rogelio Silapan, city health officer, admitted alarm over the women's attitudes.

"They want to get pregnant," he said. "It's a serious matter. We don't want this city to become an Olongapo (in Zambales)—that's why we are doing our best to locate all these prostituted women and have them registered."

A pimp who identified himself only as Roland told the INQUIRER that prostituted women from Zamboanga del Sur, Basilan, and even as far as Pagadian, Dipolog and Manila have arrived here to ply their trade.

"As you can see, videoke bars near the Southern Command are alive again," he said. "It's now play time, and more dollars."

City Administrator Antonio Orendain Jr. has ordered the regular monitoring of about 50 night spots and videoke bars here.



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One showdown Jordan didn't want

CHICAGO —For all his competitiveness, this was one game Michael Jordan didn't want to play. After 13 years and six NBA titles with the Chicago Bulls, playing against them in his old house was like facing family. And no matter how many fights or squabbles you have, no matter how far away you move or how long you've been apart, family is always family. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

SPORTS ON TV Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

TENNIS: Australian Open at 8 a.m. on Sky Cable 29 and Home Cable 17
Hopman Cup 2002 - USA vs France at 9 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Georgetown vs Notre Dame at 8 a.m. (r – 5 p.m.), Missouri vs Oklahoma at 10 a.m., Wyoming vs San Diego State at 1 p.m. on ESPN
GOLF: Nedbank Golf Challenge 2001, Day Three at 9 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
POOL: Mosconi Cup 2001 at 12 noon (r) on ESPN
Rack 'Em Up - St Andrews Cup Finals at 7 p.m. on ESPN

SIDE CONTRACTS
T'duay faces suit; 'O' signs

Joey's joy

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

JOEY Concepcion reminds me of the late Danny Floro.

Like Boss Danny in the Eighties when he had his legendary Crispa Redmanizers disbanded, Joey also felt sad to see his team leave the PBA.

Like Boss Danny, Joey's heart was crushed when Pop Cola had to go following a business decision to sell Cosmos to San Miguel Corporation. Joey's family owned the Cosmos franchise in the PBA.

Joey had strong parallels to Boss Danny's love affair with basketball.

Boss Danny's life, outside the Crispa walls in Ugong, Pasig City, was all basketball. As a youngster, his dream was to build a champion basketball team. He saved his school *baon* to fulfill that dream—without the knowledge of his father, Don Pablo. Only when Boss Danny's team began winning titles did Don Pablo come to know of his son's passion for the game. Soon enough, father relented. Crispa joined the big league and the rest, as we love to say, is history.

Under Boss Danny's stewardship, Crispa went on to become a byword in basketball from the '70s to the '80s. To this day, 18 years after it was disbanded in 1984, Crispa remains as the most dominant team that ever existed in this basketball republic. A team has yet to surpass, much less equal, the impact it had made on the nation's consciousness.

When Crispa was disbanded a year after it won its second Grand Slam in 1983 (the only one thus far to have done it twice since the PBA's birth in 1975), Boss Danny retreated to a life of golf. When he died in 1995, the funeral procession included an equal number of golfers and cagers weeping unabashedly over the loss of a sports patron who had no equal.

It seems Joey, a certified basketball buff during the last two decades or so, has found a way out from his shell of sadness.

Selecta is it.

By June Navarro

RENE Hawkins and Noli Locsin, remnants of the Tanduay Rhummasters, are considering seeking legal remedies if the remaining three years of their side contracts worth roughly P6-P8 million annually with Tanduay were not honored.

This came about even as Omanzie Rodriguez and Chito Victolero joined the millionaire's club after signing multi-million contracts with Sta. Lucia Realty yesterday.

Rodriguez inked a three-year pact worth P9 million. The 6-foot-6 shot-block artist will receive P200,000 on the first year, P250,000 on the second and P300,000 on the last year.

Victolero will earn P4.7 million in the next three years.

Player-agent Danny Espiritu said Tanduay should be held responsible for the side contracts after Tanduay withheld the players' contracts when the team's owners sold the franchise to FedEx.

This resulted in the failure of Hawkins and Locsin to collect payment as FedEx bought only the players' Uniform Players Contract from Tanduay.

The side contracts, Espiritu said, cost at least P6-P8 million a year for each player. A side contract includes bonuses and perks outside of the UPC.

"So we have no choice but to strike a deal with Tanduay. Otherwise, we will be forced to sue them for disregarding the players' side contracts," said Espiritu.

Tanduay officials, however, remained silent on the issue.

FedEx had proposed that both cagers would be included in the roster only if they decided to shelve deals outside of the UPC.

It also suggested purchasing 50 percent of Hawkins and Locsin's remaining three-year deal in case of a contract buyout. A buyout will cost FedEx roughly P7.5 million on each player.

Should both parties fail to come to terms, Espiritu said they would seek arbitration with the PBA Commissioner's Office.

A PBA insider, however, pointed out that the Commissioner's Office has no authority to mediate since Tanduay is no longer part of the league.

Espiritu said they were asking FedEx to honor the standard bonus scheme Locsin and Hawkins were getting from Tanduay but FedEx officials offered an incentive plan much lower than the previous one.

"What they (FedEx officials) want only applies to expired players. Noli and Bong have live contracts, deals that FedEx must honor," Espiritu told the INQUIRER.

With a report from Dennis U. Eroa

AMERICAN tennis star and number one seed Jennifer Capriati in her match against Rita Grande of Italy at the Australian Open Tennis Championships in Melbourne yesterday. Capriati won, 6-3, 7-6, (9). AP

Capriati joins Hingis in q'finals

MELBOURNE, Australia—Defending champion Jennifer Capriati, severely tested by the accurate shooting of Rita Grande, edged into the Australian Open quarterfinals with a 6-3, 7-6 (9) victory Monday.

Grande finally conceded the one-hour, 36-minute match with a double fault.

Ten of the last 11 points in the tiebreaker went against service, and the players were so caught up in the tension they forgot to change ends at 9-9.

"It was a tough way to end the match, and I was sorry for her, but thanks for that," Capriati said of the final double fault.

Capriati next meets seventh-seeded Amelie Mauresmo, who struggled into the quarterfinals with a 6-0, 4-6, 7-5 victory over Marlene Weingartner.

Sixth-seeded Justine Henin, the Wimbledon runner-up, advanced to a possible quarterfinal meeting with fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters, the French Open runner-up and seeded fourth here. Henin won 6-0, 6-3 against No. 12 Elena Dementieva.

Henin's and Mauresmo's matches were delayed by rain in the second set before the roofs on the two main stadiums were closed.

In men's matches, former No. 1 and 1998 Australian runner-up Marcelo Rios beat 23rd-seeded Nicolas Lapentti 7-5, 6-1, 6-4.

Capriati squandered her first match point with three errors while serving at 5-4 in the second set.

Grande, ranked No. 29, then missed a good chance to take the set when she netted an overhead smash at 6-5 in the tiebreaker. She lost another chance at 8-7 when Capriati hit a winning backhand serve return.

Capriati laughed off a netted backhand volley on her second match point, at 7-6, and missed another chance with a lob too long at 9-8. She gained her final match point when Grande hit a forehand wide.

"She played really well, and especially toward the end she really picked up her game and wasn't missing at all," Capriati said. *AP*

Ribaño: No leniency for Asiad-bound RP Team

RIBAÑO

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee secretary general Romy Ribaño yesterday said the country is likely to send no more than 200 athletes for the Busan Asian Games, slashing in half the RP contingent to the Bangkok Asiad four years ago.

Though the POC has yet to agree with the Philippine Sports Commission regarding the size of the national delegation, he said it is impossible to duplicate what happened in 1998 when the POC-PSC task force was still "lenient" in screening the athletes.

He said around 300 will be sent, including officials.

In 1998 in Bangkok, the Philippines sent 406 athletes and 200 officials; they came home with one gold medal coming from billiards.

"First, we have a very strict criteria now," said Ribaño, referring to the PSC's proposal to just send the gold medalists in the recent Southeast Asian Games and those who have won at least a bronze in the Bangkok Asiad.

"And of course, times are harder now than four years ago," he said.

There were 43 gold medalists in the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEAG and 10 medalists in the last Asiad.

"That would put so much pressure on other athletes who don't fall in the category because they have to prove that they are worthy to be included," added Ribaño.

He said there was need to consult the national sports associations regarding the criteria.

RFM president and CEO Joey Concepcion (2nd from left) shakes hands with Rey Gamboa, chair of the marketing services of the PBA board of governors, after the signing of Selecta's sponsorship of one of the two national training teams in the Governor's Cup yesterday at the Edsa Shangri-la. Also shown are Elmer Yanga (extreme left), RFM SVP for corporate affairs, and PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino. Under the conract, 'Selecta will also sponsor the Philippine team in the Commissioner's Cup. ROGER CARPIO

Mickelson wins Hope

LA QUINTA, California—Phil Mickelson, playing for the first time since last August, birdied the final three holes of regulation, then nestled his 80-yard (73-meter) wedge shot next to the pin for another birdie to beat David Berganio Jr. on the first playoff hole in the Bob Hope Classic.

Mickelson shot an 8-under 64 Sunday, capped by a brilliant flop shot that set up his birdie on No. 18, to finish at 30-under for the five-day tournament.

Berganio, who has not won on the PGA Tour, closed with a 66. He birdied two of the final three holes of regulation to force the playoff.

But, after Mickelson hit his second shot on the first extra hole, the par-5, 494-meter (543-yard) 18th on the Palmer Course at PGA West, Berganio hit his approach shot into the water in front of the green.

He then hit his fourth shot within 2.4 meters (8 feet) of the pin. But Mickelson, who hit his second shot out of the sand and into the middle of the fairway, then hit his third shot with perfect line and distance, leaving him only a tap-in.

The victory was the 20th for Mickelson, making him the 34th player in PGA Tour history to reach that plateau and securing a lifetime tour exemption. He is 5-1 in playoffs. *AP*

Rose pays tribute to father

LONDON— England's Justin Rose has displayed more patience and determination in the past three and a half years than many of his peers in his bid to win a maiden professional title.

But when the long-awaited breakthrough finally came in the European Tour's Dunhill Championship in Johannesburg on Sunday, his first thoughts were for his sick father Ken, who has been his coach for most of his life.

"This win is for my dad more than anyone. He is the guy to whom I owe most," Rose said, after closing with a seven-under-par 65 at Houghton Golf Club to win his first title by two strokes at 20-under 268. *Ruters*

Kite clinches MasterCard

KAUPULEHU-KONA, Hawaii—Tom Kite completed a wire-to-wire victory in the MasterCard Championship on Sunday, shooting a 5-under-par 67 to beat John Jacobs by six strokes.

The 52-year-old Texan birdied seven of the final 15 holes to finish at 17-under 199 on the Hualalai course. Jacobs shot a 68.

Kite shot a course-record 63 in the opening round and followed it up with a 69 on Saturday to take a five-stroke lead into the final round of the Senior PGA Tour's season-opening event.

Bobby Wadkins shot a 68 to finish third, seven strokes back.

Kite was 13 under after nine holes, with Walter Hall five strokes back and Wadkins and Jacobs another shot behind. *AP*

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Roger Antonio shot a five-over-par 77 to post a one-stroke victory over Frankie Miñoza in the ABS-CBN Celebrity Golf Classic at the Valley Golf and Country Club. Also today in 1994, Jennifer Rosales scored a seven-stroke win over Jamille Jose to become the youngest Philippine Ladies Amateur Open champion at the Manila Golf Club.

2 TEAMS KNOWN FRIDAY
PBA: Selecta licensed to select squad

By Roy Luarca

THE PBA, recognizing the support given by RFM Corporation to the Asiad-bound Philippine team, has given the conglomerate the option to choose which of the two national training pool squads will carry its brand name Selecta in the coming Governors Cup.

PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino disclosed this after signing the sponsorship agreement with Jose Concepcion III, RFM chief executive officer and president, yesterday at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel. Also present were Elmer Yanga, RFM senior vice president for corporate affairs; Rey Gamboa, marketing committee chair of the PBA board of governors, and PBA executive director Sonny Barrios.

Yanga, who has been designated by Concepcion to act as Selecta team manager, said they'd prefer the team which would have the most number of players who have been associated with RFM during their 11 seasons with the PBA.

San Miguel Corp.-Coca Cola bought RFM's Cosmos franchise this year. Cosmos owned Pop Cola.

Former RFM players among the 30 candidates to the Busan Asian Games this September are Rudy Hatfield, Poch Juinio and Johnny Abarrientos.

By Friday, the candidates would be divided into two teams of 15 players each by the coaching staff composed of head coach Jong Uichico and assistant coaches Eric Altamirano, Allan Caidic and Binky Favis.

Bernardino said other corporations may also sponsor the other national training team for the Governors Cup slated to start Feb. 10.

A prospective sponsor will also have to shell out at least P7 million like Selecta.

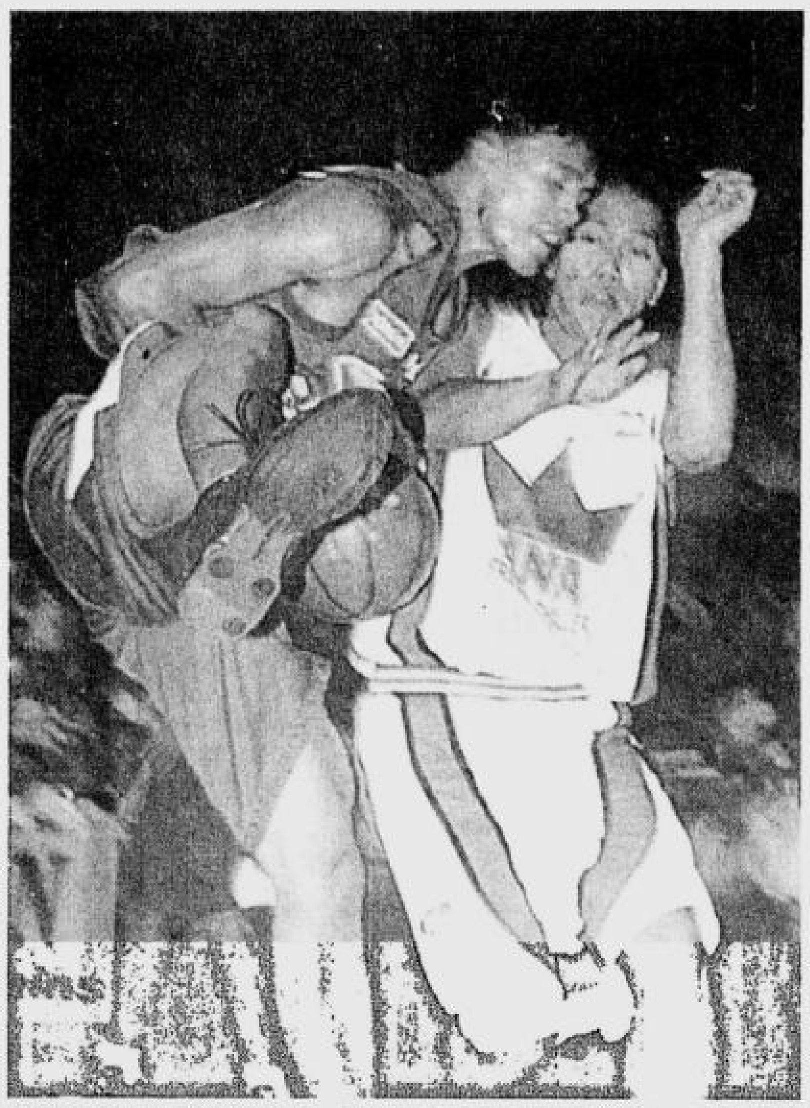
In the Commissioner's Cup, however, Selecta will have the sole right over the pruned-down squad which would be competing as the Selecta-RP Team.

"It is my lifelong dream to see the Philippines win in the Asian Games and represent the country in the Olympics," said Concepcion. "We would want to continue to help the national team as long as the PBA wants us to."

As to their return to the PBA, Concepcion said it all depends upon the business climate and the franchise fee to be imposed upon them by the league.

Aside from the national team sponsorship, RFM also intends to help promote basketball in the provinces.

4 teams jostle for final 2 PBL semis berths today



ARIEL Capus (right) of Ana Freezers watches helplessly as Shark's Gilbert Malabanan snares the rebound in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum. Shark won, 84-67, but needs to repeat over the same foe today to enter the semifinals. BETOY JOHNSON

GAMES TODAY:
(Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Ana Freezers vs Shark Energy Drink
5:30 p.m.—Kutitap Toothpaste vs Blu Detergent

By Dennis U. Eroa

FOUR teams, including defending champion Shark Energy Drink, mix it up today for the two remaining semifinal berths in the PBL Challenge Cup quarterfinals at the Makati Coliseum.

Burdened by a two-game losing streak which prevented it from making the semis outright, Shark aims to redeem lost pride as it tackles unpredictable Ana Freezers at 3:30 p.m.

Resurgent Kutitap Toothpaste collides with Blu Detergent King in the other quarterfinals pairing at 5:30 p.m.

The winners will join early qualifiers Welcoat Paints and International Container Terminal Services Inc-La Salle in the crossover semis. Both enjoy the luxury of the twice-to-beat advantage.

"The team knows the importance of this game and this is the right time to get back on track," said Shark coach Leo Austria.

Winner of the Shark-Ana tussle will advance against a familiar foe—ICTSI-La Salle. Welcoat awaits the winner of the Blu-Kutitap clash.

The Freezer Kings are on a two-game roll, no thanks to their deadly run and game spiced with a rugged defense.

"The team spirit is quite high. I pray that we survive this test against a worthy opponent," said Ana coach Rudy Mendoza, who guided Ana to third place in the Chairman's Cup. "Everybody's going to give their best."

Shark and Ana split their elimination matches this conference, with Austria's charges winning their second round encounter, 82-67.

"I'm sure Ana will come out with new adjustments. I know it will put up a good fight," said Austria.

Mendoza noted that the addition of former Far Eastern University bruisers Dwight Chavez and Jose de Guzman adds muscle to the team. "Our new recruits give me the oppurtunity to match my charges very well. Our defense can be very versatile which is important when you're going up against a team like Shark."

Shark needs to get fiery shows from PBA-bound Chester Tolomia and Gilbert Malabanan and slotman Rysal Castro in order to halt Ana, which boasts of solid firepower from Roland Pascual, Ronald Tubid, Ariel Capus and Paul Artadi.

Xavier scores anew

DEFENDING champion Xavier School whipped Chiang Kai Shek College, 76-71, last Saturday to tally its second straight victory in the Tiong Lian basketball tournament at the UNO gym.

Getting a big lift Dom Chris Tiu and point guard Tyrone Tang's dazzling performance in the last quarter, the Stallions raced to a 12-point lead after overcoming a 3142 halftime deficit to follow up their 97-67 rout of Grace Christian High the night before.

Tiu finished with 18 points while Tang and Xavier's inside operator, Sammy Young, contributed 16 points each.

Other Xavier scorers were Francis Ang, Leonard Lee, Marty Tio, Bon Siyaco, J.C. Yu, Randy Chua and Joseph Chua.

Bill Shaw golfest offers 5 cars

THE ROSTER of entries in the much-awaited 13th Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Classic has swelled to 151 pairs, golf director Bones Floro of the Wack Wack organizing committee announced yesterday.

The member-guest tournament, set for Jan. 25-26, will be played at Wack Wack East using the aggregate format and Wack Wack West using the scramble.

But the biggest news yesterday was the announcement that five cars—not "just" three as earlier reported—would be staked as hole-in-one prizes, making the tournament one of the biggest, if not the "richest," yet in memory.

"They just keep coming," said Floro. "I mean, we are being swamped with sponsors and we can't thank them enough. Surely, our participants will have the tournament of their lives."

The two-day series in tribute to Wack Wack's founder (Bill Shaw) has Herma Corporation, Taylor Made adidas, Tanduay Dillery Inc. Golforce Inc., Bingo Bonanza, Unilever Philippines and POC-EDC as the major sponsors.

FLORO

MALBAROSA

Toyota Otis will donate two Toyota cars and Toyota Motors Philippines one more Toyota car even as S.C. Kymco Pilipinas has pledged one DJ-50 world.

Not to be outdone, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines will stake two Mitsubishi cars for hole-in-one prizes in the tournament that has 26 other sponsors led by the Philippine Sports Commission, Customs Clubmakers-KZG, Pacsports, Performance, Discover Suites, Citra Metro Tollways, Smart Communications, Inc., Samsung Electronics and Pacific Paint and Manufacturing.

Other hole sponsors include Electrobus, Lawyer Gilbert Duavit, Cantada Sports Center, GG&A Club Shares, So Natural Supplement, GNC Live Well, Han Mi Marketing, Equitable-PCIB, Tehcnomeda, Miraclean Steam Laundry, Asia Brewery, Lacoste Sports Sunglasses and Splash Corporation.

The Plaza will cater the cocktails on Jan. 23 starting at 5:30 p.m. in the series that is also supported by Alternative Beverage, Haagen-Dazs and Cebu Plaza Hotel.

S.P. Malbarosa, Wack Wack general manager, has been burning oil in support of Floro's gargantuan effort to ensure a trouble-free tournament.

"I admire Bones' dedication," said Malbarosa. "All his waking hours have been spent pulling all the stops for a successful Bill Shaw event this year."

POC tells tennis factions to follow Philta by-laws

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GO BACK to your constitution.

That's what the Philippine Olympic Committee advised the warring factions of the Philippine Tennis Association, which has been torn by dispute following its regional elections.

Finally breaking its silence over the burning issue, the POC, through its secretary general Romy Ribaño, said both parties must consult the provision in the Philta charter to resolve the rift.

"The POC can't just go into the fray because we don't know the requirements of the Philta constitution regarding elections," said Ribaño.

He added that the Philta problem is "still" in the regional stage and unless it breaks out in the national level, the POC has no choice but to just wait and see.

Ribaño said the rival group, led by Children's Tennis Workshop's Jovy Mamawal, should have submitted the certificate of elections to the Philta after the Jan. 5 vice presidential polls.

"How can we take the first step when they don't submit evidence that elections really took place?" asked Ribaño.

Mamawal contended that unless there is a POC representative, his group won't hand the certificate of elections to Philta executive board. He said the election returns are now "deposited for safekeeping."

Mamawal's camp also accused Philta president Buddy Andrada of courting newly elected regional VPs in a hope to turn the tide in his favor.

"He (Andrada) is convincing them to hold a reelection, telling them that the Jan. 5 elections will not be recognized," said Mamawal, "and they will be declared winners only if they throw support to Andrada."

But Andrada vehemently denied the allegations saying he was invited by at least six regions to observe their elections. So far, he has been to Iloilo, Davao and Cavite, according to the Philta head.

"Soon, I will be in Ilocos, Cordillera and Bacolod because these people want clarification although they are autonomous," said Andrada.

Andrada maintained that no election took place in Jan. 5 because there are no certificate of elections submitted to the Philta. "They (regions) have the right to postpone their elections."

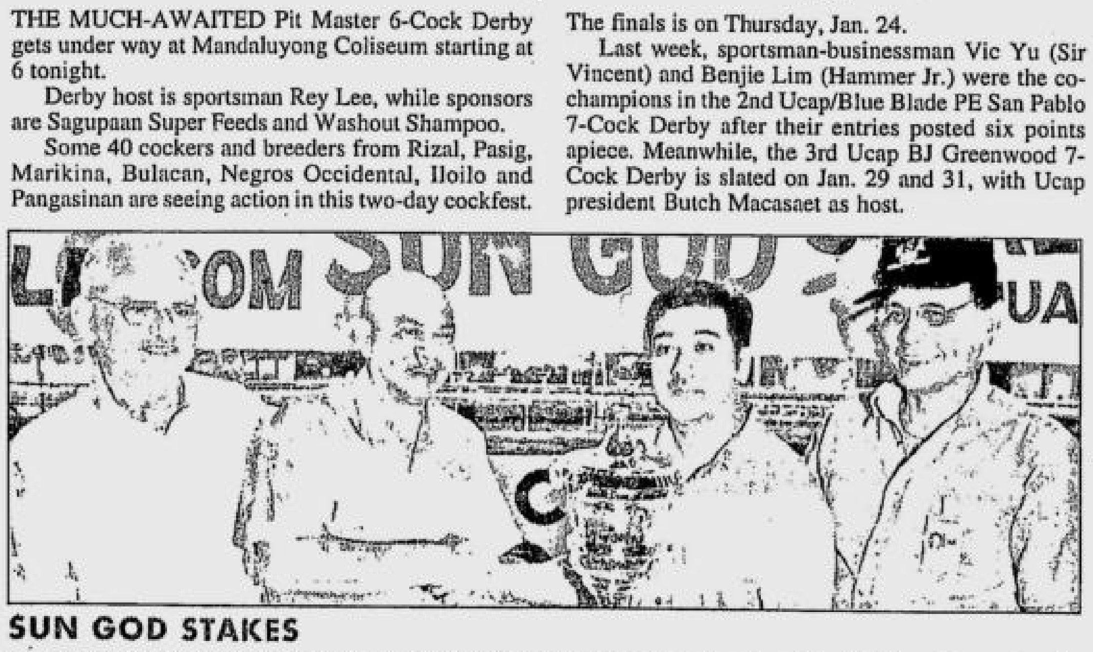
Pit Master derby on tonight

THE MUCH-AWAITED Pit Master 6-Cock Derby gets under way at Mandaluyong Coliseum starting at 6 tonight.

Derby host is sportsman Rey Lee, while sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

Some 40 cockers and breeders from Rizal, Pasig, Marikina, Bulacan, Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Pangasinan are seeing action in this two-day cockfest. The finals is on Thursday, Jan. 24.

Last week, sportsman-businessman Vic Yu (Sir Vincent) and Benjie Lim (Hammer Jr.) were the co-champions in the 2nd Ucap/Blue Blade PE San Pablo 7-Cock Derby after their entries posted six points apiece. Meanwhile, the 3rd Ucap BJ Greenwood 7-Cock Derby is slated on Jan. 29 and 31, with Ucap president Butch Macasaet as host.



SUN GOD STAKES

Lawyer Jose Ferdinand "Joy" Rojas (third from left) receives the Sun God Stakes Race trophy from Philracom Chair Andrew Sanchez following the victory of his colt, Conquer D'Sun, in the event last Sunday at the San Lazaro Hippodrome. Looking on are MJCI director Martin Cepeda (left) and Philracom deputy executive director Dr. Romy Buencamino.

SPORTSWATCH

DLS-Zobel heads cast

DEFENDING champion La Salle Zobel heads a cast of six squads seeing action in the all-Luzon finals of the 18th Coke Go-for-Goal football championship starting tomorrow at the Philsports pitch in Pasig City. Aside from La Salle, also joining the Coke-sponsored under-16 tournament are Pag-asa National High School of Albay, San Vicente High School of Camarines Norte, Masbate Comprehensive High School, General Licerio High School of Rizal and Unson National High School of Pagsanjan. Tournament chair Jojo Rodriguez said the six squads will be split into two groups of three teams each in the elimination round with the top two from each bracket advancing to the crossover semifinals on Saturday at the Ateneo field in Pasig.

MCC meet Sunday

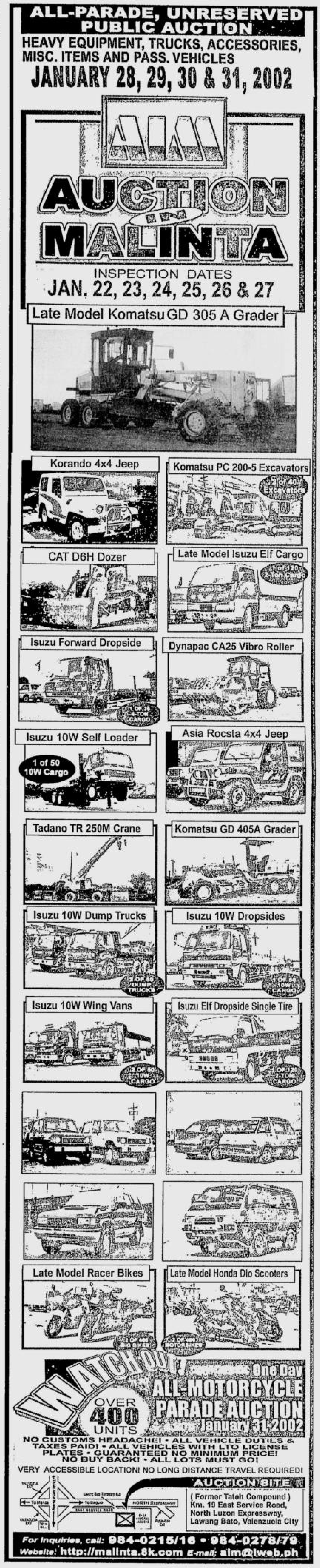
THE METROPOLITAN Chess Club will hold a nonmaster (2100 below) active chess tournament on Sunday, Jan. 27, at the Centermall, Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan. The monthly tournament is open to all untitled chess players with NCFP or MCC ratings not over 2100, regardless of ages and sexes. Up for grabs in this one-day event is a total pot of P10,000 with the champion getting the top prize of P3,000 plus trophy. The second, third and fourth placers will receive P1,500, P1,000 and P700, respectively. Registration is accepted at the venue site until Sunday at least before the tournament starts at 10 a.m. For other details, call MCC at 826-8560.

Aguinaldo prevails

EMILIO Aguinaldo College downed Colegio de San Lorenzo, 84-76, to fortify its semifinal hopes, while co-leaders Lyceum and St. Francis of Assisi forged a duel for the top Final Four slot last Sunday in the National Capital Region Athletic Association men's basketball tournament at the Lyceum gym. Edzel Dumandan and Nino Songco tallied 29 and 22 points, respectively, as the Generals kept their hopes alive for a shot at any of the last two berths in the semifinals. Coach Omar Isla's team is tied at fourth place with DLSU-Manila, Polytechnic University of the Philippines and Colegio de San Lorenzo with identical 2-4 win-loss marks.

Steelers oust Ravens

PITTSBURGH—The Pittsburgh Steelers held the Baltimore Ravens to three first downs in three quarters, harassed Elvis Grbac into numerous mistakes and advanced to the AFC championship game with a 27-10 rout Sunday. The top-seeded Steelers, cheered on by a raucous, towel-twirling crowd that also resembled its 1970s predecessors, will play the New England Patriots in the AFC championship game Sunday. By winning, the Steelers made certain the Patriots' come-from-behind overtime victory Saturday over Oakland was the final game in Foxboro Stadium - and that Pittsburgh will play host to the AFC title game in its first season in Heinz Field. *AP*



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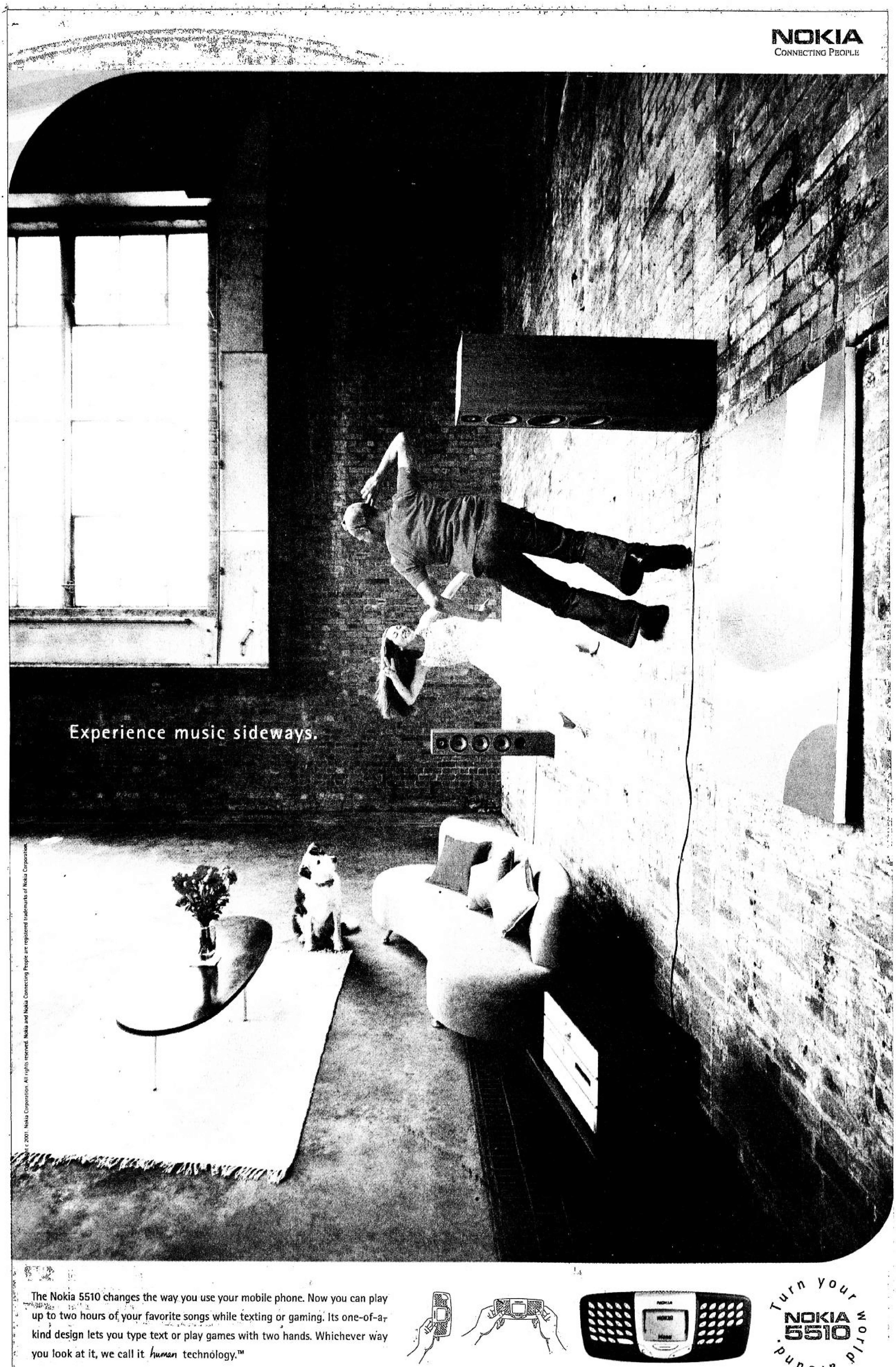

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▨ **Prosecutor warns Strawberry boyfriend** A18

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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JV: My town is not Metro drug center

San Juan mayor protests PNP treatment of raid

By Nelson F. Flores and TJ Burgonio

JV EJERCITO

SAN Juan Mayor JV Ejercito yesterday cried foul over police officials' insinuation that San Juan has become the center of the illegal drug trade in Metro Manila.

He also lamented what he called the lack of tact of the national police when they failed to inform him of Friday's raid on a drug laboratory where seven Chinese were arrested and more than P100 million worth of shabu was seized.

Ejercito, in a signed statement, commended the drug bust but added he found it disconcerting that as chief executive of San Juan, he was among the last to know about the raid.

"(We) were left in the dark," Ejercito said, noting that this was also what the Philippine National Police's Narcotics Group and Criminal Investigation and Detection Group did in the investigation of the Nida Blanca murder case.

Ejercito later admitted that San Juan police were informed of the operation two hours before the raid and were apprised of developments as they were happening.

PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza said: "This is about drugs, not politics."

Ejercito also deplored the action of police officials when they held a news conference at the raided drug laboratory yesterday, three days after the bust.

In the news conference the police officials painted San Juan as "the center of illegal drug trade in Metro Manila," said Norbita Taguba, San Juan Municipal public information officer.

"The PNP usually hold its news conferences in Camp Crame," Taguba noted. "Why would they, all of a sudden, hold it here in

JV: MY TOWN/ A18

Korina no-show

By Christian V. Esguerra

ABS-CBN newsreader and talk show host Korina Sanchez did not show up yesterday for the preliminary investigation of a complaint her former maid filed against her in the Pasig City prosecutor's office.

"Korina was a no-show," said Melanio "Batas" Mauricio, lawyer of complainant Bernardita Inocencio, 42.

Mauricio said Sanchez should have attended the hearing. But the broadcaster sent her lawyer, Salvador Panelo, to respond to the four-page criminal complaint Inocencio filed.

Panelo argued that Sanchez did not have to attend yesterday's hearing since he already represented her. He said Mauricio wanted Sanchez present so the media could feast on her case.

"(Mauricio) would never see my client," Panelo told the Inquirer. "We will submit all necessary affidavits, but Korina need not appear in court."

Prosecutor Gabriel Alberto gave Sanchez until Feb. 4 to file a counter-affidavit and answer Inocencio's allegations that the broadcaster did not remit the helper's contributions to the Social Security System when Inocencio was still working for her.

The complaint filed at the Pasig prosecutor's office is one of two criminal charges that Inocencio slapped on her former employer.

Sanchez and her reported boyfriend, Paul O. Aquino, are also facing criminal charges before the Makati prosecutor's office for allegedly beating up Inocencio last Dec. 21.

Inocencio was scheduled yesterday to undergo another medical examination at the Quirino General Hospital because of a persistent headache.

If the test on Inocencio showed a positive result, Mauricio said he would upgrade the physical-abuse case filed against Sanchez and Aquino to attempted or frustrated homicide.

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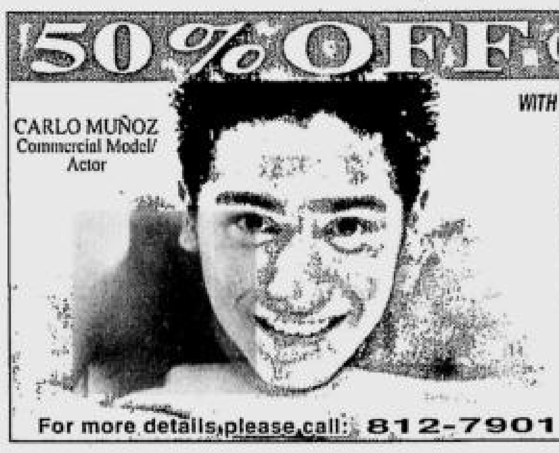

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Residents protest land swap

By Jerome Aning

RESIDENTS of a barangay in Carmona, Cavite denounced as illegal the municipal government's move to allegedly swap a 36,000-square meter lot for another lot owned by a Taiwanese firm.

The 59 residents of Barangay Maduya in eastern Carmona said their 5,000-meter barangay road was included in the exchange deal and compromised their right of way.

They accused Mayor Roy Loyola and members of the municipal council of not consulting them when the town government authorized the exchange of lots with the Golden Mile Resources Development Corp. in 1997.

The GMRDC acquired a large tract of land near the community and reportedly planned to develop it into an industrial park.

Emiliano Marcha, 43, one of the residents, said they thought the transfer would spur development in Maduya.

"We expected to benefit from the development but instead, we are being harassed to leave our homes," he told the Inquirer. "We were surprised to wake up one day and learn that we have been deprived of the road we use in going to our homes and our farmlands.'

According to the residents, the GMRDC has prohibited them from using the road that leads to their homes. They said several town policemen were recently sent there to enforce the ban.

But the residents maintain they have been using the road for decades. As the debate on the road's status raged, residents said they have been forced to use a circuitous route via a cable bridge and a one-meter-wide creek-side road.

Marcha said the creek-side road which they were forced to use is "dangerous, especially to the young, because it is so narrow and subject to erosion."

The residents said the council did not consult them when they passed two resolutions authorizing the swap and reclassifying the traded property as ordinary land.

In Resolutions 027-97 and 019-18, the Council ruled the road was already abandoned and no longer being used as a thoroughfare. The body also said it is being slowly taken over by squatters.

But Marcha said there are no squatters on the land and the residents there have been using the road even before the GMRDC arrived. He also said the residents' suspicions grew when the resolutions were passed after the swap was announced.

"If the GRMDC want us to sell our lots to them, they could have done so, since we are open for resettlement, depending on the conditions," he said.

The residents, Marcha said, have exhausted all means in trying to make Mayor Roy Loyola listen to their appeal. They have brought their pleas to the Bantay Bayan Foundation and the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption.

Last Friday, they went to the Office of the Ombudsman to ask for help in filing possible charges against the mayor. They were aided by Vice Mayor Amador Alumia, Loyola's erstwhile political ally and former municipal administrator.

The Ombudsman has asked them to formalize their complaint.

Prosecutor warns Strawberry boyfriend

By Christian V. Esguerra

STRAWBERRY

THE LAS Piñas City prosecutor's office has issued an "ultimatum" to the boyfriend of slain former child actress Strawberry and his four security aides to show up and answer the criminal charges Raynaldo Picar and his family filed against them.

Without a counter-affidavit from John Mark Doromal, Strawberry's boyfriend and his aides, local prosecutors will be forced to decide on whether there is probable cause based solely on the arguments and evidence the Picars presented, said prosecutor Napoleon Monsod.

"They really have to show up and present their side," Monsod yesterday told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

Doromal and his aides are facing attempted murder charges before the prosecutor's office for allegedly firing at the Picars during traffic altercation at BF Executive Village last Dec. 18.

Strawberry, whose real name is Anouk Baldo, was shot during the confrontation. She died two days later. She was 25.

Doromal's security aides were identified as Marfie Arabani, Felicisimo Mardarlipe, Rex Tanduyan, and Alexander Memis. They are said to be employed at Combat Security Agency, which is run by Doromal's father.

Monsod said Doromal and his group snubbed the hearing for preliminary investigation on Jan. 11.

Doromal's lawyers filed instead an urgent motion to stop the preliminary investigation and asked police to probe deeper, Monsod said. He said he junked the motion since the case had already been submitted to his office for resolution.

He will decide whether to file the case before a Las Piñas City regional trial court by early March.

An investigating team composed of members of the Southern Police District, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, and the National Bureau of Investigation will conduct a reenactment of the December traffic altercation on Thursday, Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez, SPD chief, told the Inquirer.

Authorities will determine through the reenactment if the Picars or Doromal and his group fired the shots that killed Strawberry.

The team is now consolidating the accounts of at least seven people on the bloody confrontation.

Unidentified caller reported Baron's death, says radio man

By Alcuin Papa

A RADIO reporter yesterday told investigators of the Southern Police District that he received a call on his cellular phone that someone had shot and killed Army Capt. Baron Cervantes, within minutes of the actual shooting.

GMA-dzBB radio reporter George Bandola appeared before SPD investigators and said the unidentified caller phoned him about 7 p.m. on Dec. 31 while he was reporting a fire in Guadalupe Viejo in Makati City.

"Baron is dead, someone shot him in Las Piñas," Bandola quoted the unidentified caller as saying in Filipino.

Bandola said he tried to ask the name of the caller but the line went dead.

He called the Las Piñas police to confirm the killing, but lawman told him they had not received a report of the incident.

"I immediately issued a flash report over my network that Baron was shot," Bandola said. "It was only then that the Las Piñas police started checking."

He said that when he talked to Cervantes earlier, the self-proclaimed spokesperson of the Young Officers' Union said he was under threat from people he knew. But Cervantes never told him who the people were.

"(Cervantes) just said he received many death threats from those trying to destabilize the Arroyo government," Bandola said.

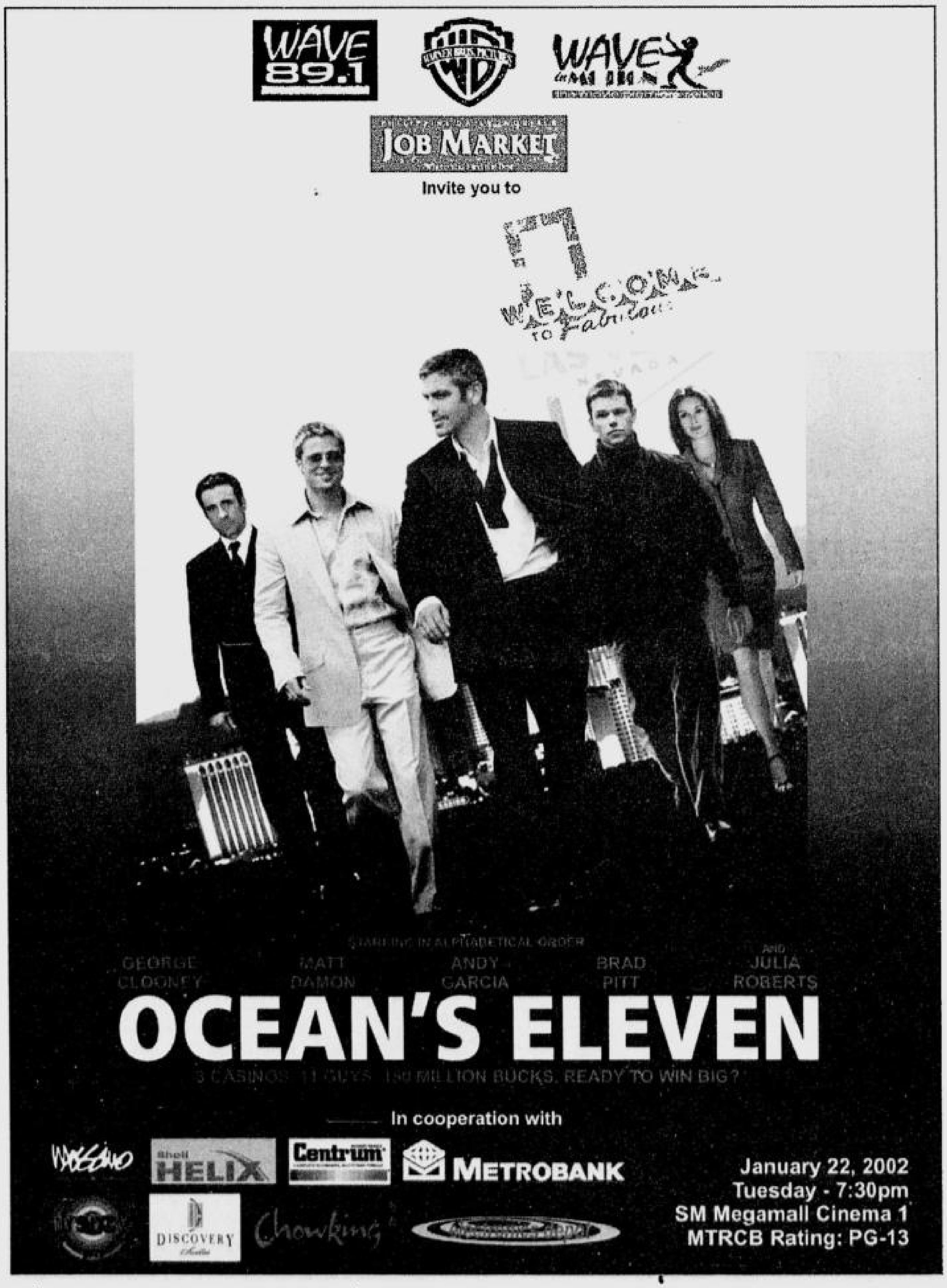
Cervantes reportedly earned the ire of several police and military officials when he said a destabilization plot was in the offing.

"He just said these were people involved in anomalous activities in government," Bandola told investigators.

Investigators said they are now focusing on the character of Cervantes and have summoned people who were linked to him.

Supt. Eric Velasquez, chief legal officer of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said they were trying to clear up Cervantes' past activities and his dealings with prominent political personalities.

Bandola said if investigators wanted to establish the personality of Cervantes, they would find it helpful to talk to National Security Adviser Roilo Golez. Cervantes reportedly worked under Golez as a consultant, Bandola said.



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Palawan problem, country's microcosm

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE IBON Foundation Inc. was lying through its teeth when it said that most Filipinos oppose the participation of American troops in wiping out the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf.

The silent majority wants the Abu Sayyaf problem solved as soon as possible so the country can pick up the broken pieces and go on with its life.

Perhaps Ibon's survey respondents were its members who are either leftists or left-leaning.

***

Ibon said the results of its survey showed that 52.73 percent of the respondents replied "no," while 40.32 percent said "yes" to the question whether they approved the direct participation of US troops in fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

But how scientific was Ibon's survey? How many were leftists and moderates, rich and poor, young and old, educated and illiterate? How many were from Metro Manila and from the provinces? How many of the respondents read the newspapers and watch the TV network news or listen to the radio?

If it really wanted an objective appraisal of the citizenry's sentiments toward American troops in Basilan, why didn't Ibon hire the services of professional poll groups like the Social Weather Stations?

***

I was in Puerto Princesa City over the weekend. I learned how much Palaweños hate the Abu Sayyaf terrorists whom they blame for the city's slow commerce and its decreased tourist arrivals.

The Moro terrorists raided last year Dos Palmas, an upscale resort off Puerto Princesa, and kidnapped some of its guests and staff. Up to now, two of the resort's guests, a missionary couple from Kansas, USA, are still in the hands of their Moro abductors.

"If not for those SOBs, this city would still be crawling with foreign tourists and business would be brisk," said a Puerto Princesa resident in Filipino.

"*Dapat, ipulin na silang lahat* (They should be wiped out)," said another Palaweño of the Abu Sayyaf.

Both of those residents are "100 percent" in favor of US troops taking part in hunting down the Moro terrorists.

***

Dos Palmas, the ill-fated resort, has closed down as a result of the raid.

Other upscale resorts in island towns off the province in the north are also about to close shop because there are no guests.

The world-famous Underground River, visited by thousands of tourists in the past, has very few visitors. Most of the lodging houses and stores that catered to tourists visiting the subterranean river have temporarily closed down.

I noticed that on my way to Puerto Princesa and back to Manila, there were very few passengers on the plane. I was told that some shipping lines have cut down the number of ships calling at the city's port.

***

The situation in Puerto Princesa and Palawan is replicated in many parts of the country.

Tourist arrivals in other parts of the country have gone down considerably because of the Moro terrorists from Basilan and Sulu, and the unabated kidnap-for-ransom incidents.

If the government doesn't solve the problems of Abu Sayyaf and kidnapping-for-ransom soon, this country might become one big ghost town for tourists.

***

On top of the business slowdown and decreased tourist traffic, Palawan has become a haven for the communist New People's Army.

At least 80 NPA members are roaming Palawan unmolested. Recently, they killed two policemen in an ambush in one of the towns near Puerto Princesa.

Some prominent Palaweños are clamoring for the return of the Marines to the Western Command. When the Marines were still in Palawan, there were no NPA guerrillas in the province.

"*Noong dito pa ang mga* Marines, *walang* NPA *na gumagala sa gubat namin* (When the Marines were still here, no NPA guerilla roamed our forests)," said a Puerto Princesa policeman.

The Marine contingent at Wescom was sent to Mindanao to augment troops fighting the Moro Islamic Liberation Front during the time of President Erap, and the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan in the middle of last year.

***

Now that the partial results of the investigation of the Jan. 15 carnage in Jolo are in, the government should lose no time in disarming the Moro rebels-turned-policemen who were involved.

Nine Marines were killed when Moro police integrees opened fire at them during a rally for the release of rebel leader Nur Misuari.

Although the Moro cop integrees have been confined to the barracks, this move won't appease the Marines who want to avenge their dead comrades.

If the government doesn't order the disarming and prosecution of the pro-Misuari cops, it will have a rebellion in its hands from the Marines, the "fightingest" soldiers in the Armed Forces.

***

As this column is being written (4 p.m., Jan. 21, 2002), there is a Luzon-wide blackout which is estimated to last 8 to 12 hours.

What is it this time, you incompetent, good-for-nothing guys at the National Power Corp?

Shabu couple lands in jail

A MAN and his wife found themselves behind bars after the woman refused to be left alone by her husband who was arrested for possession of shabu during a buy-bust in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

The man, Hadji Naif Sarip, 42, was caught allegedly carrying about 200 grams of shabu with a street value of P120,000, police said.

Police said a Lanao del Sur court had issued a warrant for Sarip's arrest last Dec. 21 for murder charges.

Police, however, were still trying to determine the involvement of Sarip's wife, Amorin, 41, who insisted on going with her husband when he was brought to the Central Police District Station 1.

Chief Insp. Ruben Mirendo, chief of the CPD Station 1 Drug Enforcement Unit, said Sarip was arrested in his residence in Barangay 586 in Sta. Mesa, Manila about 1 a.m. yesterday.

Mirendo said he and his men had been watching Sarip for weeks now, after they received information from Camp Crame that he was involved in drug pushing. Sarip was arrested in the act of receiving P15,000 from PO1 Roderick Valencia, who pretended to buy 25 grams of shabu.

Agnes E. Donato

JV: My town is not Metro . . .

(From page A17)

San Juan?"

Ejercito insisted that San Juan police and his administration have been vigilant where drugs are concerned.

In yesterday's police conference, PNP-NG chief Director Efren Fernandez announced that drug charges have been filed before the justice department against the seven suspects.

Fernandez refused to elaborate when he mentioned that the police were trying to determine who was behind the operation of the drug laboratory.

Records showed that the seven Chinese "laboratory technicians" were arrested in the raid on the suspected laboratory on Araullo Street in Barangay Addition Hills Friday afternoon.

Lawmen identified the seven as Chua Sak Hap, Tian Sang, Q Che-Nang, Cha Bo, Chang Hong and Chua Tok Sit, all natives of Fijian, China and suspected members of a China-based drug ring.

Large amounts of unrefined shabu, 213 kilos of ephedrine, 208 bottles of ethanol, 284 bottles of acetone, four sets of rotary evaporators, several distillation machines, high-tech laboratory equipment and other drug paraphernalia were seized during the raid.

PNP officials believe the laboratory was capable of processing P500 million worth of shabu monthly, and that a powerful political clan was behind its operation.

'Black Hawk Down' turns Somalia firefight into story of heroism

LOS ANGELES—Eight years after a firefight in Somalia left 18 American soldiers dead and more than 70 wounded, some veterans of the battle feel a sense of redemption.

In the movie "Black Hawk Down," a military mission widely viewed by the public as a failure has been recast by Hollywood as a tale of unlikely heroes.

"I was very concerned the movie would take a political stance, like the reports that originally came out that it was a military debacle—or that it would be portrayed as the greatest military success since the D-Day invasions," said Army Capt. Jeff Struecker, who was a staff sergeant in a convoy ambushed by Somalis.

"Clearly, it wasn't either of those events. It was just a lot of individual heroism. It's like that old quote, 'Uncommon courage was common that day'."

"Black Hawk Down," based on Mark Bowden's book of the same name, tells the story of a military mission to Mogadishu on Oct. 3, 1993, to capture two top lieutenants of warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

The operation was supposed to take no more than an hour. It turned into a 17-hour battle that pitted several hundred US soldiers against thousands of Somalis.

Two Black Hawk helicopters also were shot down in the longest sustained firefight involving American soldiers since Vietnam.

While critics have praised the movie's attention to the details of combat, it avoids the mission's political fallout. It does not include the images of Somalis dragging the bodies of American soldiers through the streets — images that caused then-President Bill Clinton to order an immediate withdrawal of troops.

"In that sense, it was a failed mission. But in the narrower perspective, taken by both the book and the movie . . . these men accomplished their mission," Bowden said. "They did what they set out to do. They did so at a terrible cost to themselves and the Somalis."

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer dismissed concerns that the movie glosses over the larger story of American involvement in Somalia.

"We never set out to tell that story," Bruckheimer said. "We wanted to make a film about what these young guys were sent out to do and what they did to survive."

The movie comes at a time of renewed interest in Somalia, as the United States presses its war on terrorism and searches for other terrorist havens. The military has begun reconnaissance flights and naval patrols off Somalia's coast to determine if the country is harboring fleeing members of the al-Qaida network.

A postscript to "Black Hawk Down" that drew connections between al-Qaida and the 1993 battle was removed after some test audiences objected.

Originally slated for March, the movie's release was pushed up after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"I don't think it's jingoistic," said director Ridley Scott. "I think it's totally relevant to where we are today."

For many of those involved in the fighting, the movie was an accurate depiction overall of the ferocious fight, even though it was a Hollywood interpretation. The military let Bruckheimer use four Black Hawk helicopters, and an actual Army Ranger unit took part in some scenes.

"I first kind of wanted to say, 'That's not exactly how it happened.' But then I caught myself," said Struecker. "It's still just a movie, and even though they are making great efforts to be accurate, it will never be 100 percent accurate."

Sgt. Matt Eversman, played in the movie by actor Josh Hartnett, said the movie got the feel of the battle right.

"We captured the (Somalis) who needed to be captured. Certainly, there was a price. That is a fact. That's what the movie shows," he said. "Obviously, it's a little different because it does not depict the entire battle . . . and it condensed some characters."

Former Sgt. Keni Thomas said there were too many people and too much going on to fit into a movie. As for the depiction of the soldiers as heroes, Thomas struggled for an answer.

"Were we heroes? I don't know. I think we just did our job. If that's heroic, fine. I'll let everybody else figure that one out," he said.

But former Sgt. Scott Galentine, who was injured during the Mogadishu battle and is depicted in the movie, expressed skepticism about the current interest in the battle.

"Where were all these people in 1993 when it happened? There were people torn up to shreds and nobody even raised an eyebrow. Now these guys from Hollywood are portraying us and, yes, they do a fair job," he said. "But people will go and see this and a day or two later they'll forget about it. That's the shame." *AP*

JOSH Hartnett stars in "Black Hawk Down."

Focus on obesity

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

TWO Mondays ago, Channel 7's "I-Witness" featured a documentary on fat people. Obese individuals are often targets of cheap jokes in these parts, so it was a relief to see a show where they were being taken seriously.

After a while, though, it becomes apparent that the production was taking a scattershot, impressionistic approach instead of a rigorously focused one. Fat individuals were interviewed about various aspects related to their obesity, and the show relied mostly on their observations for its insights.

This turned out to be a spotty approach because not all of the interviewees were forthcoming or insightful. More research and resource persons should have been utilized to buttress the interviewees' subjective ruminations.

We trust, however, that the docu made enough of a positive impression on viewers for them to remind themselves that poking fun at fat people isn't funny at all, and that the obese need our help and understanding, not our cheap digs.

Feedback

FROM Paola of Sampaloc: "I have been an avid viewer of Star TV's 'Temptation Island' since it started airing on Channel 26. Sometimes, my friends and I watch it at my place and then we guess if a date on the show would lead to something that would sabotage the pending marriage of a couple.

"This show is a liberal way of presenting some couples' hidden fears before they tie the knot. Location—and plot-wise, every 'dream' date is exciting and I look forward to what might transpire.

"Some of the scenes are sensual, but that's reality. The show would be bland otherwise. But the production is able to present these scenes without being sleazy . . ."

Movies on TV

JAN. 28 at 9 p.m. on Star Movies, "A Fish Called Wanda." Jailbird George knows the location of the jewels his gang has stolen. **John Cleese** plays George's lawyer, and he's the romantic target of **Jamie Lee Curtis**, who's a member of the gang.

Jan. 26 at 3:45 p.m. on Cinemax, "A Map of the World." **Sigourney Weaver** is a nurse whose life hits rock bottom after her best friend's daughter accidentally drowns while in her care. Things get worse when the town turns against her, and she finds herself fighting changes of child abuse. **Julianne Moore** also stars.

Jan. 25 at 8:30 a.m. on Star Movies, "Angela's Ashes." Frank and his family escape the poverty in Ireland before the Second World War. When one of his siblings die, they leave New York, only to find the situation in Ireland even worse. **Emily Watson** and **Robert Carlyle** star.

Jan. 24 at 3:15 p.m. on Cinemax, "A Streetcar Named Desire." **Marlon Brando** plays the brutal Stanley Kowalski, and **Vivien Leigh** is Blanche Dubois. They bring to life all the throbbing passion of Tennessee Williams' masterpiece.

Jan. 27 at 11:30 p.m. on HBO, "Carlito's Way." **Al Pacino** completes his five-year jail term and tries to go straight. When an old friend (**Sean Penn**) asks him for a favor, he is torn between his loyalty to his friend and his dream of escaping to a new life.

Jan. 23 at 9 p.m. on HBO, "Dave." **Kevin Kline** looks so much like the US president that he's tapped to be his double when the chief executive suffers a massive stroke that leaves him in a coma. However, another man wants to be the next president and does not like the fact that Dave has become so popular.

Jan. 28 at 3:45 p.m. on Cinemax, "East of Eden." **James Dean**'s world comes crashing down due to his rivalry with his brother over the love of **Julie Harris**, and his search for the truth about his family.

Jan. 24 at 11:30 p.m. on HBO, "Ed TV." The life of a video store clerk (**Mathew McConaughey**) is thrown into chaos when he agrees to let a TV crew tape him for 24 hours.

Jan. 29 at 6:30 a.m. on Cinemax, "Giant." About the rivalry between the Benedict and Rink families in Texas that spans two generations. Starring **James Dean, Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson** and **Dennis Hopper**.

Brian McKnight shares the stage with Regine in two-night concert

SHOWS

ASIA'S songbird Regine Velasquez finally meets Brian McKnight, the voice behind such international chart-toppers as "One Last Cry," "You Should Be Mine," "Back at One" and "6,8,12" in two nights of with heart-warming, soul-stirring renditions synonymous with romance and good reminiscing.

In both powerful solo performances and duets, Regine and Brian will infuse fire once again into their individual hits that have captured the emotions and sweet dreams of our generation.

Brian has been elevating the game since his eponymous 1992 debut. The album that featured the smash "One Last Cry" went platinum as did his 1995 follow-up, "I Remember You."

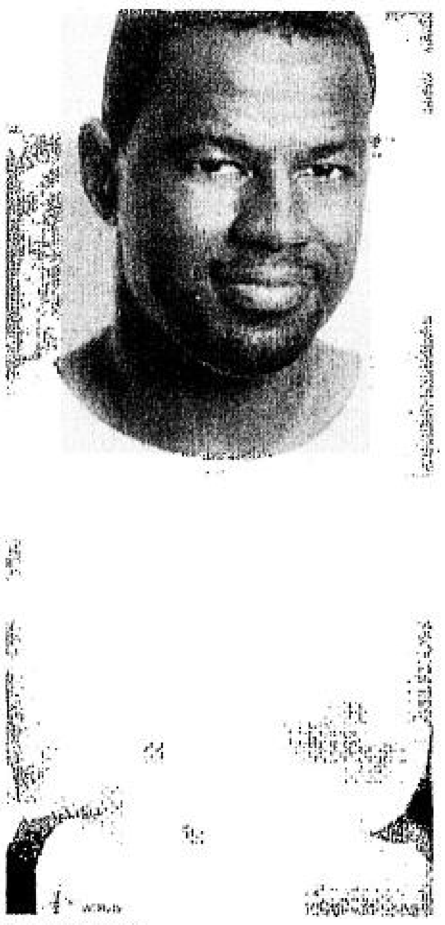
In 1997, Brian released "Anytime," produced with rapper Sean "Puffy" Combs and Mase. The album that sold over two million copies and boasted the top 20 single, "You Should Be Mine."

Brian's 1999's hit "Back at One" reached triple platinum success. The title track stayed at the number two spot on Billboard Pop Singles chart for 8 weeks and the album earned Brian four additional Grammy nominations, an American Music Award, a Blockbuster Award, and a NAACP Image Award.

Brian and Regine in "Two for the Knight" is slated Feb. 14 and 15, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. It is a production of Viva Concerts Inc. and MTV, with Mossimo as major sponsor.

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555 or Viva Office at 413-2572.

Avail of a 10-percent discount by purchasing tickets not later than Jan. 25.



McKNIGHT

Jamming at Libis

COUNTRY Waffles-Libis continues to spice up Eastwood City Walk's live entertainment circuit with a stellar line-up of today's popular and up-coming live bands.

To satisfy the listening pleasure of discriminating music fans and its clientele, Country Waffles-Libis tapped K-10 Sound System for its state-of-the-art audio equipment.

"Jammin' @ Country Waffles-Libis" kicks off with the energetic performance of the Folkus, Jan. 23.

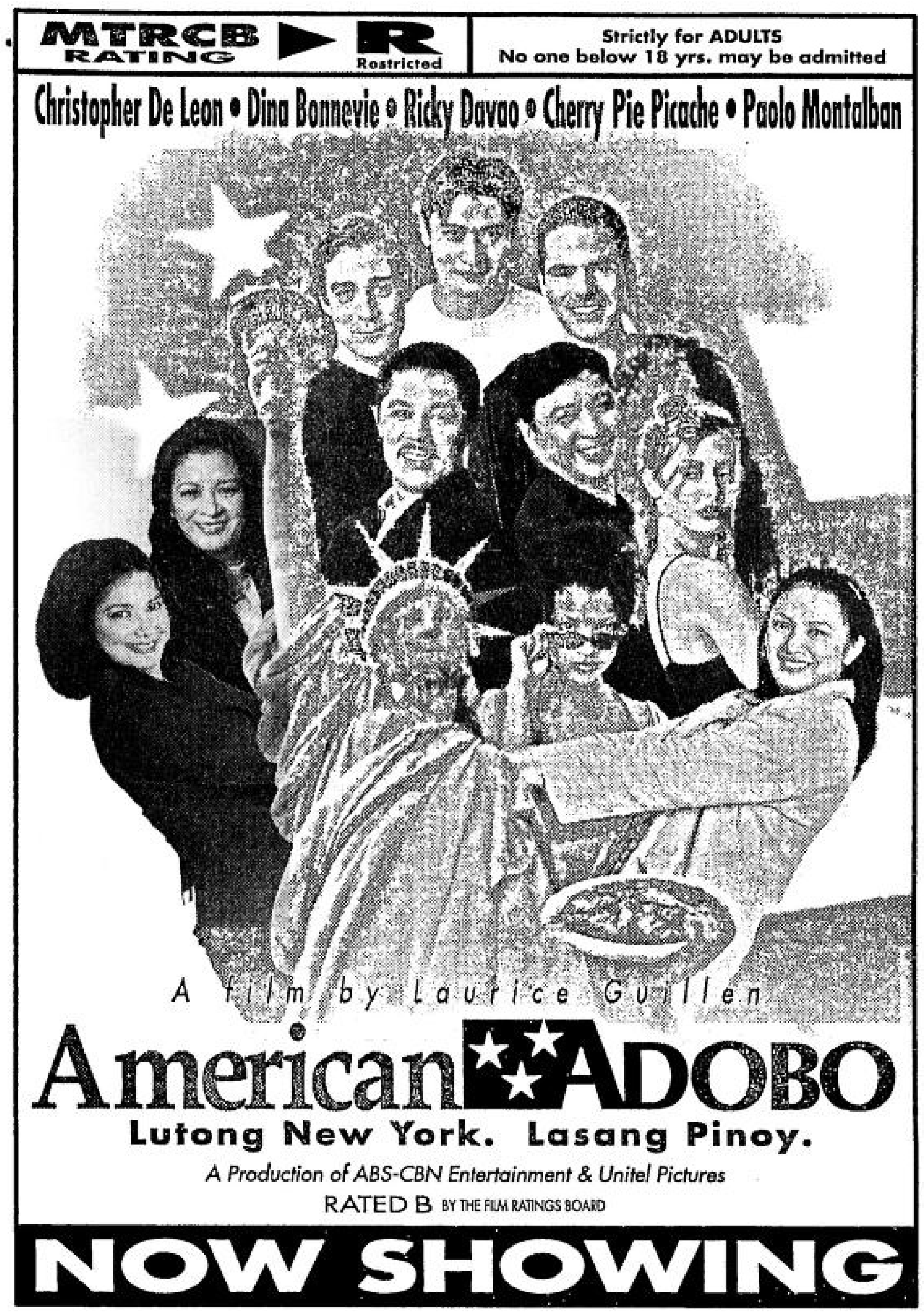
Acoustic Heart Strings takes centerstage Jan. 24, while Acoustic Jive goes live Jan. 25.

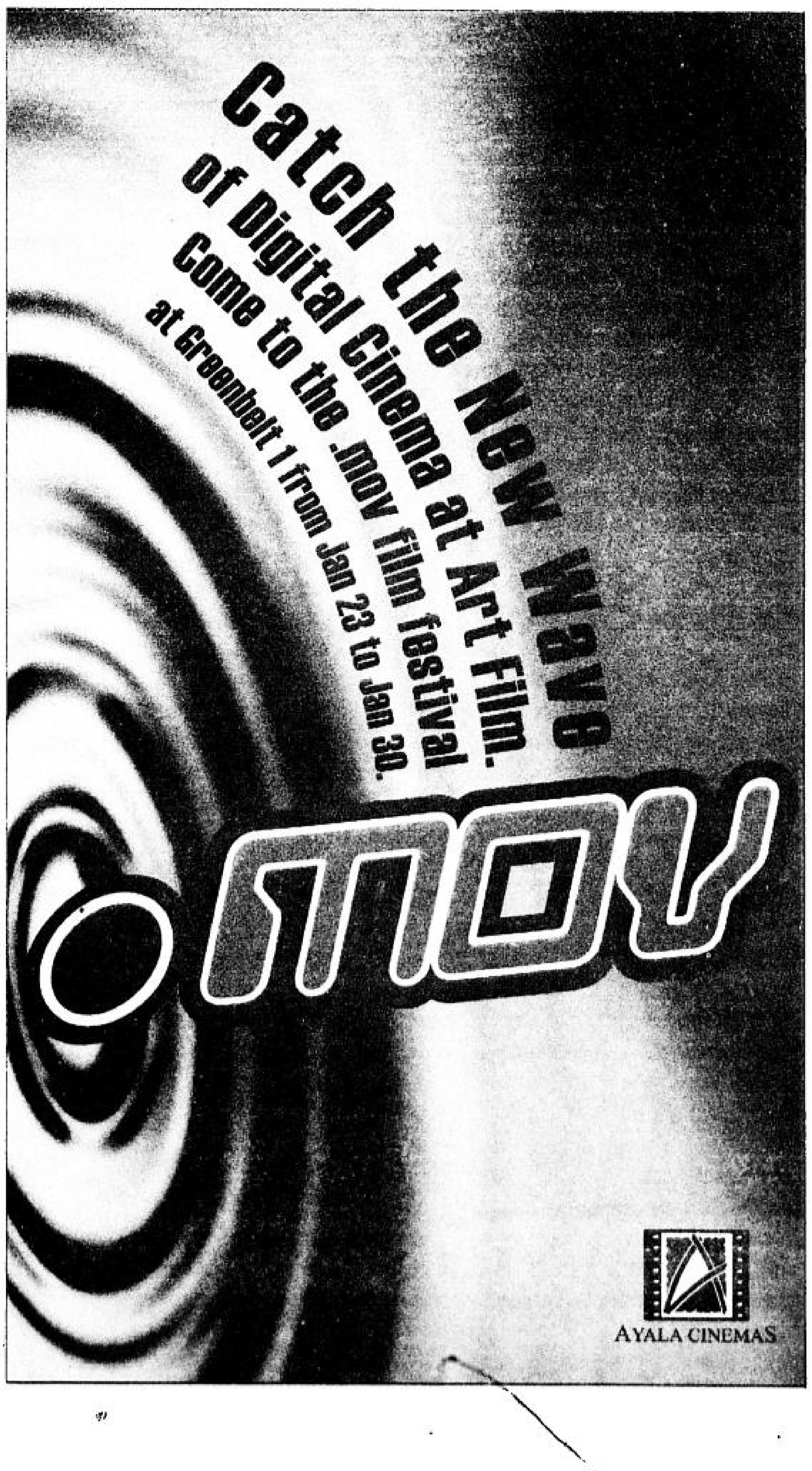
On Jan. 26, recording artist Chad Borja and the Pop Fusion band promise to wow their audience with exciting and lively entertainment numbers.

Folkus and Acoustic Heart Strings return onstage Jan. 30 (Wednesday) and Jan. 31 (Thursday), respectively.

Show starts at 9:30 p.m.

For reservations, interested parties may call 421-3331.


MTRCB RATING ▶ R Restricted
Strictly for ADULTS
No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted
Christopher De Leon • Dina Bonnevie • Ricky Davao • Cherry Pie Picache • Paolo Montalban
A film by Laurice Guillen
American ADOBO
Lutong New York. Lasang Pinoy.
A Production of ABS-CBN Entertainment & Unitel Pictures
RATED B BY THE FILM RATINGS BOARD
NOW SHOWING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at Greenbelt 1 from Jan 23 to Jan 30.
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All Digital Sound

GLORIETTA 1
formerly QUAD

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES	in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
2	ZOOLANDER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	AMERICAN ADOBO	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	BLACK HAWK DOWN (Advance Screening)	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	AMERICAN ADOBO	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN (Advance Screening)	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES THX	in DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	SPY GAME	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	BEHIND ENEMY LINES	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	ZOOLANDER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	TEARS OF THE BLACK TIGER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES	in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	AMERICAN ADOBO	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	WEEKEND W/ POPS JAN. 25 & 26 9:00 PM Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	AMERICAN ADOBO THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN (Advance Screening)	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	ZOOLANDER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4 GOLD (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	ZOOLANDER
6 GOLD (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	GLASS HOUSE
8	AMERICAN ADOBO
9	AMERICAN ADOBO
10	BURLESK KING

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	BURLESK KING
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	PANINDA
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
Golden Pearl THX	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	BURLESK KING
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	AMERICAN ADOBO

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	BURLESK KING
3	BLACK HAWK DOWN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5	BUKO PANDAN

METROPOLIS star
Tel. 850 4285

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BUKO PANDAN
5	BURLESK KING
6	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) Tel. 7512010 to 13

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	TATARIN
2	SPY GAME

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	BURLESK KING
2	BUKO PANDAN
3	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
A	BUKO PANDAN

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	BURLESK KING
2	BUKO PANDAN
3	BLACK HAWK DOWN
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	BUKO PANDAN
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	ZOOLANDER
5	BURLESK KING
6	AMERICAN ADOBO
7 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
8 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
9 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	BUKO PANDAN

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	BURLESK KING
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BUKO PANDAN
4 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DRAGON
5	HUBOG
6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	ZOOLANDER

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BUKO PANDAN
4	ZOOLANDER
5 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
6	BURLESK KING
7 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	HUBOG

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	BUKO PANDAN
5 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BURLESK KING

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	BURLESK KING

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	BUKO PANDAN
Lords	BUKO PANDAN
Jennet	RESERVE

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	BURLESK KING
3	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	BURLESK KING

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BUKO PANDAN
4	BURLESK KING
5	BLACK HAWK DOWN

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	BURLESK KING
2	BUKO PANDAN
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	BUKO PANDAN

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	BURLESK KING

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	BURLESK KING
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BURLESK KING
2 (DTS)	AMERICAN ADOBO
3 (DOLBY)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	ZOOLANDER

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2 (DOLBY)	ZOOLANDER
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	BURLESK KING

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HUBOG
2	MUSKETEERS
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	BURLESK KING
2	WALANG IWANAN
3 (DOLBY)	THE SCORE
4 (DTS)	SPY GAME

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	BUKO PANDAN
3	BURLESK KING
4 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	ZOOLANDER
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	BURLESK KING
5	GIRL FEVER

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	ZOOLANDER
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	AMERICAN ADOBO

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	ZOOLANDER
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	HUBOG
3	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	BURLESK KING
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	SAPAGKAT KAMI AY TAO LAMANG
2	WALANG IWANAN
3	BURLESK KING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	SPY GAME
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	WALANG IWANAN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4 (DTS ES)	BURLESK KING

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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GALLERIA
632-9115-16 / 633-7941 loc. 279

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	SPY GAME
5	AMERICAN ADOBO
6	ZOOLANDER
7	GLASS HOUSE
8	ON THE LINE
9	BUKO PANDAN
10	BURLESK KING

ERMITA
536-7809 TO 12

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BUKO PANDAN
3	BURLESK KING
4	SPY GAME
5	AMERICAN ADOBO
6	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
7	ZOOLANDER

METRO EAST
632-9115-16 / 633-7941

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	SPY GAME
6	BUKO PANDAN
7	ZOOLANDER
8	BURLESK KING

NOVALICHES
936-3228 TO 31

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	ZOOLANDER
5	SPY GAME
6	BURLESK KING
7	BUKO PANDAN
8	AMERICAN ADOBO

IMUS
(046) 471-0188

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	ZOOLANDER
3	AMERICAN ADOBO
4	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5	BURLESK KING
6	BUKO PANDAN

BACOLOD
(034) 441-0453 / 0459

1	SPY GAME
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	AMERICAN ADOBO
4	DREAM GIRL
5	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
6	WOLF GIRL

ILOILO
(033) 336-0077 / 0079

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	WOLF GIRL
3	SAPAGKAT KAMI'Y TAO
4	ON THE LINE
5	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
6	MUSKETEERS

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	BURLESK KING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	AMERICAN ADOBO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	ZOOLANDER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	BAGONG BUWAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	SPY GAME
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	BUKO PANDAN
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SAKIM SA PAG IBIG / BEDROOM SECRET
ODEON	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
ODEON-2	BURLESK KING
ROBEN	BUKO PANDAN
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	THE HOLE / EARTHQUAKE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	BUKO PANDAN
REMAR	BUKO PANDAN
REMAR-2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	BURLESK KING
B	BUKO PANDAN
C	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-2	BUKO PANDAN
CINEMA-3	AMERICAN ADOBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BURLESK KING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
CINEMA-6	HUBOG
CINEMA-7	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-8	WALANG IWANAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	ZOOLANDER
CINEMA-12	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-14	SPY GAME
CINEMA-15	AMERICAN ADOBO
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	ZOOLANDER
CINEMA-2	BLACK HAWK DOWN
CINEMA-3	AMERICAN ADOBO
CINEMA-4	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
CINEMA-5	SPY GAME
CINEMA-6	LORD OF THE RINGS
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173808

1	THE OTHERS
2	CORKY ROMANO
3	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
4	AMERICAN ADOBO
5	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
6	MAHAL KITA . . .
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	BURLESK KING

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7181418

1	MAHAL KITA . . .
2	CORKY ROMANO
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	THE OTHERS
5	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
6	ZOOLANDER
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	SPY GAME
9	AMERICAN ADOBO
10	BURLESK KING

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	BURLESK KING
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	ZOOLANDER
4	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5	THE OTHERS
6	MAHAL KITA . . .
7	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
8	MAHAL KITA . . .
9	AMERICAN ADOBO
10	CORKY ROMANO
11	SPY GAME
12	BUKO PANDAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	THE OTHERS
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	CORKY ROMANO
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	GLASS HOUSE
6	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
7	ON THE LINE
8	BURLESK KING
9	MAHAL KITA . . .
10	ZOOLANDER
11	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
12	AMERICAN ADOBO

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6328401

1	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
2	THE OTHERS
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
5	CORKY ROMANO
6	SPY GAME
7	BURLESK KING
8	ZOOLANDER
9	MAHAL KITA . . .
10	AMERICAN ADOBO
11	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
12	BUKO PANDAN

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	CORKY ROMANO
2	MAHAL KITA . . .
3	BUKO PANDAN
4	.BURLESK KING
5	AMERICAN ADOBO
6	ZOOLANDER
7	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	HUBOG
10	ON THE LINE
11	BAGONG BUWAN
12	SPY GAME

SM SOUTHMALL
8069088 • 8068782

1	BURLESK KING
2	THE OTHERS
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	MAHAL KITA . . .
5	BUKO PANDAN
6	ZOOLANDER
7	AMERICAN ADOBO
8	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
9	CORKY ROMANO
10	LORD OF THE RINGS

SM CITY CEBU
2313870

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
5	BURLESK KING
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	BUKO PANDAN
8	AMERICAN ADOBO

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
2	CLOSED
3	SPY GAME
4	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5	GLASS HOUSE
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	CLOSED
8	AMERICAN ADOBO

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	AMERICAN ADOBO
5	ZOOLANDER
6	MAHAL KITA . . .

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294875

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	ZOOLANDER
4	MAHAL KITA . . .

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	AMERICAN ADOBO
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	MAHAL KITA . . .

SM CITY TUTUBAN
2514302

1	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	BURLESK KING
4	MAHAL KITA . . .

SM CITY DAVAO
2974004

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
2	AMERICAN ADOBO
3	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
4	WALANG IWANAN
5	BURLESK KING
6	GLASS HOUSE

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN! 4 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN! 4 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

1
2

SOON TO OPEN!
2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

6389781-85

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

Curiosity, admiration for ex-macho dancer

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I'VE been deluged with e-mail regarding the books of **Princess Punzalan**'s half-brother **Ben Hernandez**, which I wrote about in my previous column. "Startalk" even called to arrange an interview with Ben.

Everyone is obviously curious to get the gory details of Ben's life when he was still a macho dancer. But over and above the curiosity, I think there is admiration for Ben's honesty. In show biz, where it is normal for celebrities to deny, evade or even lie, it's a welcome change to have someone like Ben who has no qualms about sharing what he learned from his past.

Even his sister Princess agrees. "I think people will learn what goes through the mind of a person like Ben. There are yearnings in people's hearts that move them to do unusual things. Life is a process."

She believes that if their mom **Helen Vela** was still alive, she would stand by Ben, too. "I know Mama would be supportive of Ben if she was still around. Ben's books impart lessons learned from painful and hard experiences. He imparts wisdom and not just empty stories."

Since not all bookstores are open to the idea of selling Ben's controversial books, you can buy them at selected outlets. "Bayaran," "Si School Boy, Si Kolboy" "Si Adan, Si Esteban" and "Honey" are available at Cig-Magz Robinson's Galleria, Café Rialto Ali Mall, Merriam-Webster Cubao, Stone House on E. Rodriguez and Tropical Hut Sta. Lucia. Or you may call Pablo or Vida at 746-1235 or 747-1009. The books sell for P35-P45.

May Ben's story inspire you out there and show you that there is life after each fall and second chances are God's free gift which we should not waste.

One of the letters follow.

"I do not normally reply to requests for feedback to columns . . . In fact, to my recollection, this is the first . . . All I felt was a strong urge, as a Christian, to show my moral support for a man who once, like me, was chained in sin, and is now restored and perfected through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . I feel for him and I pray that his endeavors will be blessed. It really is tough, but with the restoration comes a responsibility to fulfill . . .

"I encourage Mr. Ben Hernandez to press on. He is called by God to boldly speak of his once sinful state, and profess how God moved mountains to restore him and be the son that God has seen him to be . . . God bless you.

Marijo Carreon, Bread from Heaven, Las Pinas City."

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

Instant classic

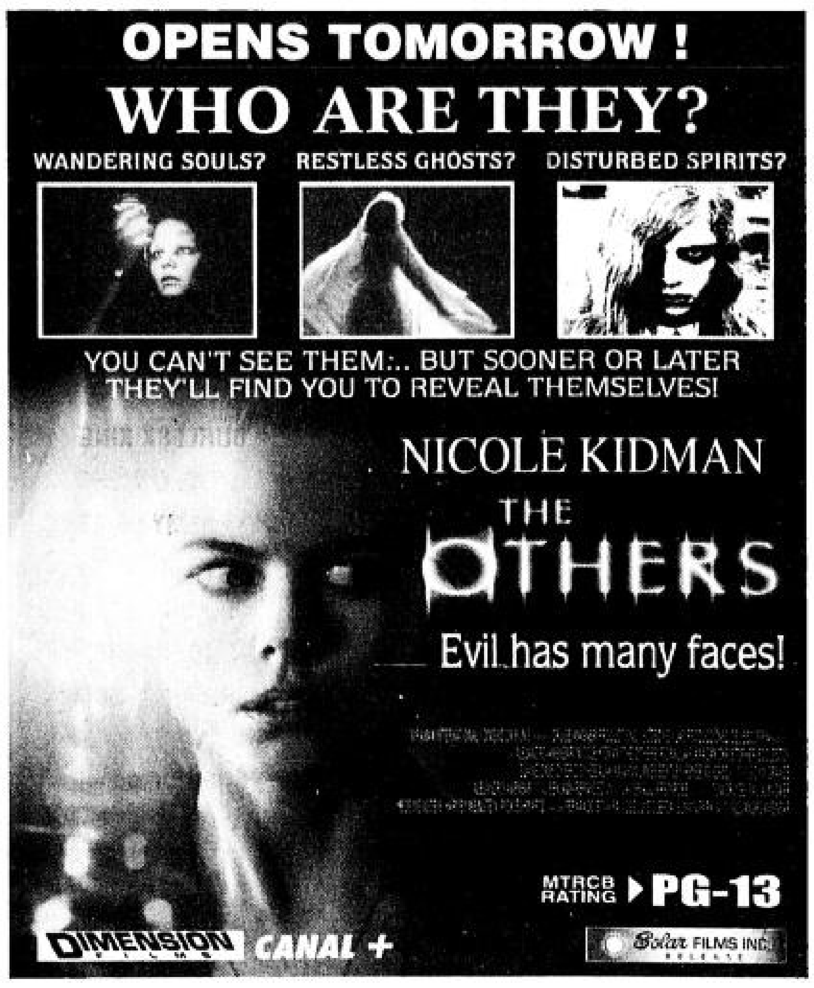
(From page A22)

I will, however, defend "The Fellowship Of The Ring" as the most satisfying *bitin* movie ever made. There's no way you can emerge from LOTR and feel like you didn't get your money's worth, what with something dramatic, funny, amazing, frightening or thrilling happening every few seconds of the 160-minute running time.

Eighty pesos for a movie that delivers more than 300 delights is a bargain, if you ask me.

Be warned, though, that the movie may trigger an expensive, lifelong obsession with "Lord Of The Rings" merchandise. I've already spent a small fortune on the soundtrack and a few toys.

I'm also saving up for a trip to New Zealand (where they shot the film) because I now feel the need to be in Middle Earth.



OPENS TOMORROW !
WHO ARE THEY?
WANDERING SOULS? RESTLESS GHOSTS? DISTURBED SPIRITS?
YOU CAN'T SEE THEM:.. BUT SOONER OR LATER THEY'LL FIND YOU TO REVEAL THEMSELVES!
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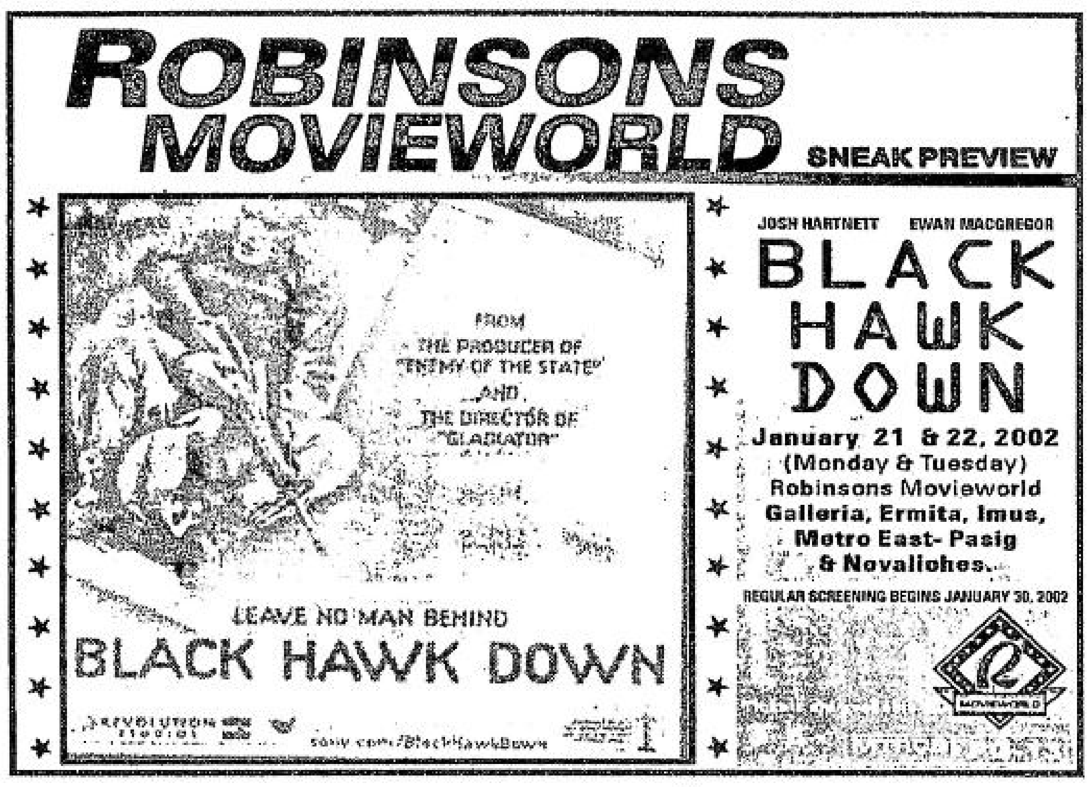
THE OTHERS
Evil has many faces!
MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13
DIMENSION FILMS CANAL + Solar FILMS INC. RELEASE



ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD SNEAK PREVIEW
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "ENEMY OF THE STATE" AND THE DIRECTOR OF "GLADIATOR"
LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND
BLACK HAWK DOWN
sony.com/BlackHawkDown
JOSH HARTNETT EWAN MACGREGOR
BLACK HAWK DOWN
January 21 & 22, 2002
(Monday & Tuesday)
Robinsons Movieworld
Galleria, Ermita, Imus, Metro East- Pasig & Novaliches.
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ZOOLANDER - P13 11:45, 1:45, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45	BLACK HAWK DOWN - P13 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	AMERICAN ADOBO - R18 11:00, 1:10, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:10
BEHIND ENEMY LINES - P13 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50	SPY GAME - P13 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:50, 3:20

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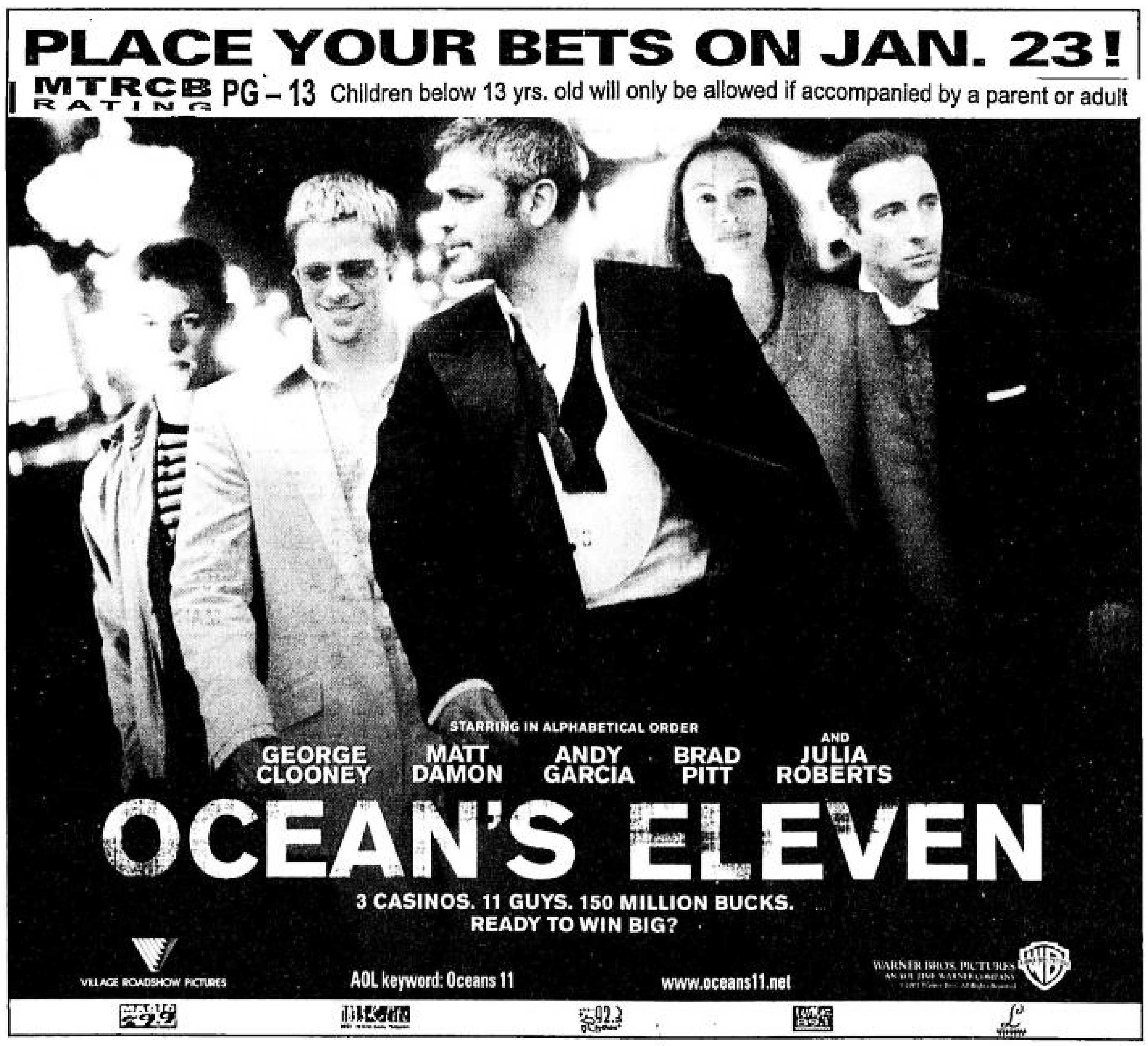

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LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND
BLACK HAWK DOWN
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All star cast!
"The best war movie I've seen!"
-- Larry King, CNN
From Ridley Scott, acclaimed director of GLADIATOR and Jerry Bruckheimer, producer of PEARL HARBOR comes a war epic voted by *Time Magazine* as one of the best films of the year.
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Columbia Pictures' BLACK HAWK DOWN is the true story of elite American soldiers on a mission to stop a ruthless Somalian warlord in 1993.
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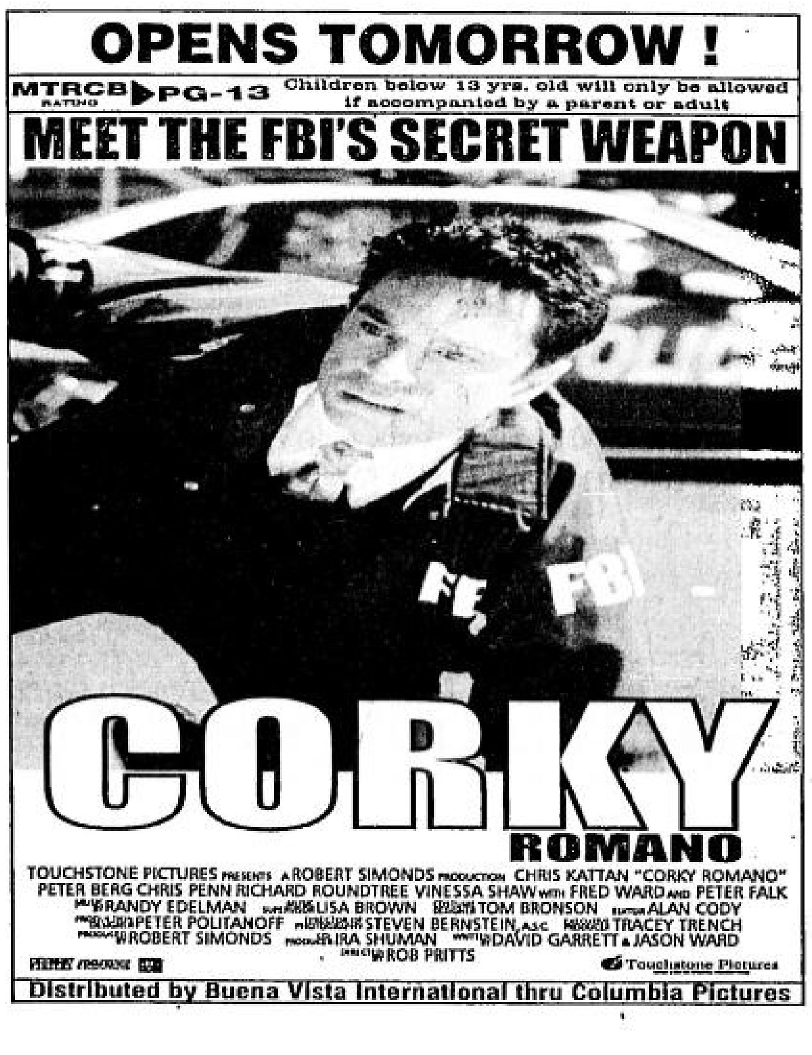

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CORKY ROMANO
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PETER POLITANOFF STEVEN BERNSTEIN, A.S.C. TRACEY TRENCH
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ROB PRITTS
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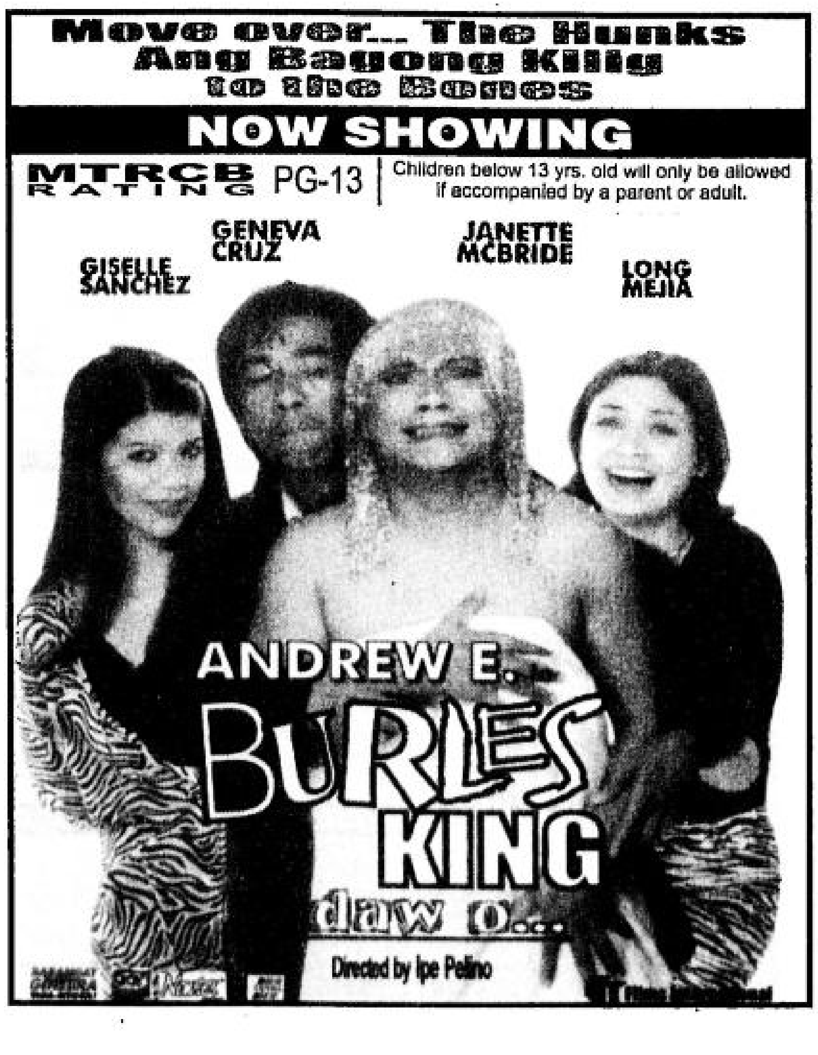

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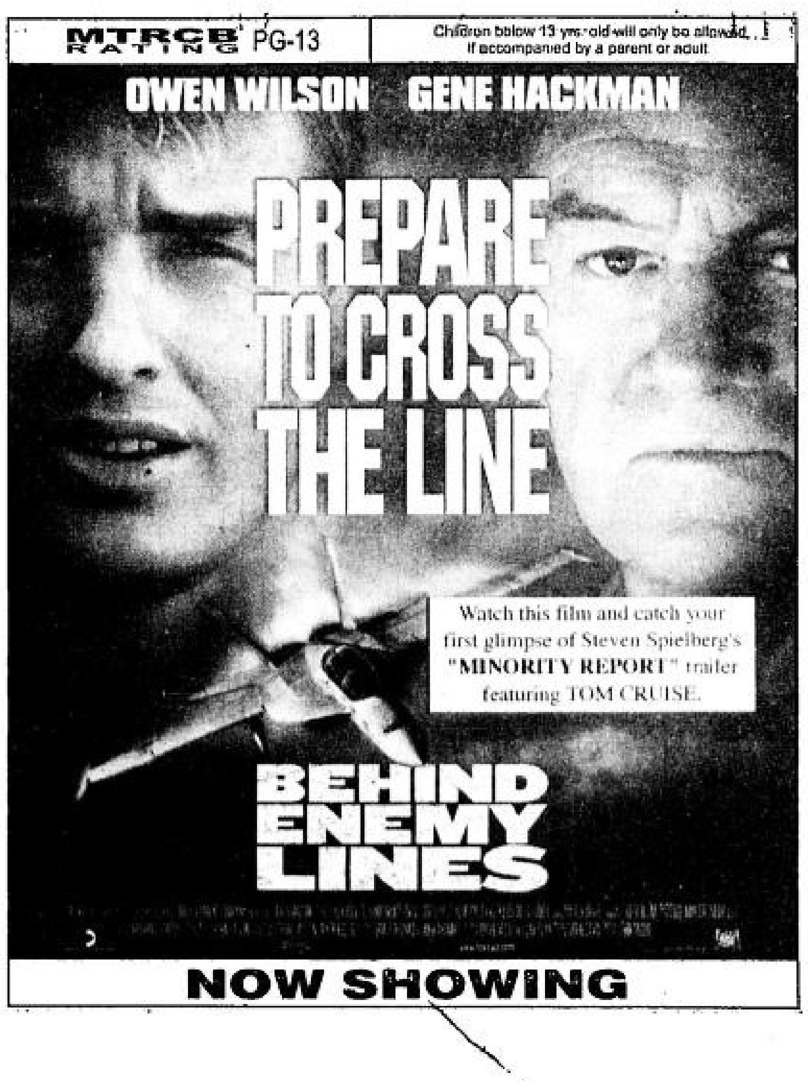

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PREPARE TO CROSS THE LINE
Watch this film and catch your first glimpse of Steven Spielberg's "MINORITY REPORT" trailer featuring TOM CRUISE.
BEHIND ENEMY LINES
NOW SHOWING

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

'LOTR'

Instant classic

BY PAUL DAZA

REVIEW

THE MAGNIFICENT, Wagnerian prologue of the first "Lord Of The Rings" (LOTR) movie, "The Fellowship Of The Ring," is a sequence of such terrifying grandeur that it's already worth the price of admission.

> Something dramatic, something funny, something amazing, something frightening happens every few seconds

The prologue is designed to whet your appetite and plunge you into the first live-action film adaptation of author J.R.R. Tolkien's complex and beloved magnum opus. It shows a sweeping battle scene where a multitude of warriors are slicing one another in a dark, foreboding landscape, and is photographed by a restless, airborne camera.

That the 150 minutes which follow the prologue is as beguiling and jampacked with pleasures both epic and intimate is no small compliment to director and co-writer Peter Jackson, who has given us in "Fellowship" a once-in-a-lifetime film, an instant classic.

Forget "Star Wars" and "Harry Potter." If the next two "Lord Of The Rings" movies are even half as good as "The Fellowship of The Ring," the LOTR trilogy will be *the* fantasy event of the decade, if not the century.

A FELLOWSHIP of hobbits. Wood (second from left) with Monaghan, Astin and Boyd

Set centuries ago in the mythical land of Middle Earth, "Fellowship" is about an urgent mission to destroy an all-powerful ring before it falls into the wrong hands. Escorting the band of gold to its destruction are the diminutive hobbit Frodo Baggins (Elijah Wood), his wizard friend Gandalf (Ian McKellen) and seven other do-gooders, humans and otherwise. Hot on their heels are sinister, hooded baddies on horseback—the Black Riders—who'll stop at nothing to get the ring.

The story follows the structure of a heroic quest, where Frodo must go from point A (his home in the Shire) to point B (the cruel land of Mordor), but encounter a zillion life-threatening obstacles along the way.

Nagging questions

Superb as it is, the movie isn't without its nagging questions, especially if, like me, you haven't read the books. I wondered, for instance, why it took decades for the antagonists to discover that the ring was in the Shire. Also, if the wizard Gandalf can ride a giant eagle's back, why doesn't he ask other eagles to give the fellowship a ride to make their journey to Mordor faster and less perilous? In addition to these petty details, there is a bewildering number of names of characters and places to memorize, the (expensive) solution to which is repeated viewings of the movie or the outright purchase of the books.

Many characters were reportedly lost in the translation from book to screen. The good news, however, is that the characters who did survive the adaptation are given unforgettable scenes. As Fodo's much older cousin Bilbo, Ian Holm has the scariest moment in the movie, and it comes without warning. There's also a powerful but painful wizards' duel between Gandalf and Saruman (Christopher Lee).

As the elf queen Galadriel, Cate Blanchett is a luminous presence who gives the movie a dreamlike quality that only the best works of fantasy can convey. As elf lovely Arwen, Liv Tyler is also ethereal, though fans are still debating whether or not it's her voice that's heard in the film.

Newcomer Orlando Bloom impresses in the climactic battle scene as the archer Legolas, while Sean Bean shines as the traitorous but ultimately heroic Boromir.

Fine acting

Frodo's hobbit sidekicks Mery and Pippin (Dominic Monaghan and Billy Boyd) are consistently irritating, but they do provide much-needed comic relief. I share Gandalf's opinion, however, that they should just spare us their clumsiness and stupidity and die at the soonest possible time.

Thankfully, Elijah Wood's portrayal of the lead hobbit Frodo is a darn fine piece of acting; otherwise, no hobbit in the film would be sympathetic.

The only problem with Elijah/Frodo is that he cries and whines quite often, and nearly dies twice.

Because death and danger stalk our heroes throughout LOTR, the music has a mournful, Celtic quality which is perversely appealing. Thankfully, the Irish-tinged melodies just stop short of making one think of leprechauns.

Those who love movie music will be surprised to know that LOTR's composer, Howard Shore, is best known for the scary minor chords he made for the Oscar-winning serial thriller "The Silence Of the Lambs." It's easy to predict that from now on, it is for his evocative work in "The Lord Of The Rings" that Shore will be remembered.

And the pleasures derived from the music of "Fellowship" don't end there. The Irish New Age singer/composer Enya also contributed two songs to the movie, which are as moody and haunting as anything she's ever done.

To kill for

Any musician would probably kill for a chance to work for a film director as visually ambitious as Jackson. His fastidious eye for the most effective and telling shot remains a rare gift even in today's visually literate age.

In addition to creating the stunning aerial angles which show off the fantastic landscapes, Jackson also has simpler shots which are just as effective. My favorite shows all the members of the fellowship quarrelling about who will protect the ring, even as they are reflected in the ring itself.

I also admired how Jackson made the creature Gollum creepier by never showing him in his entirety. We see only parts of Gollum, like his eyes and hands, because his slithery, raspy voice is frightening enough, as is his silhouette.

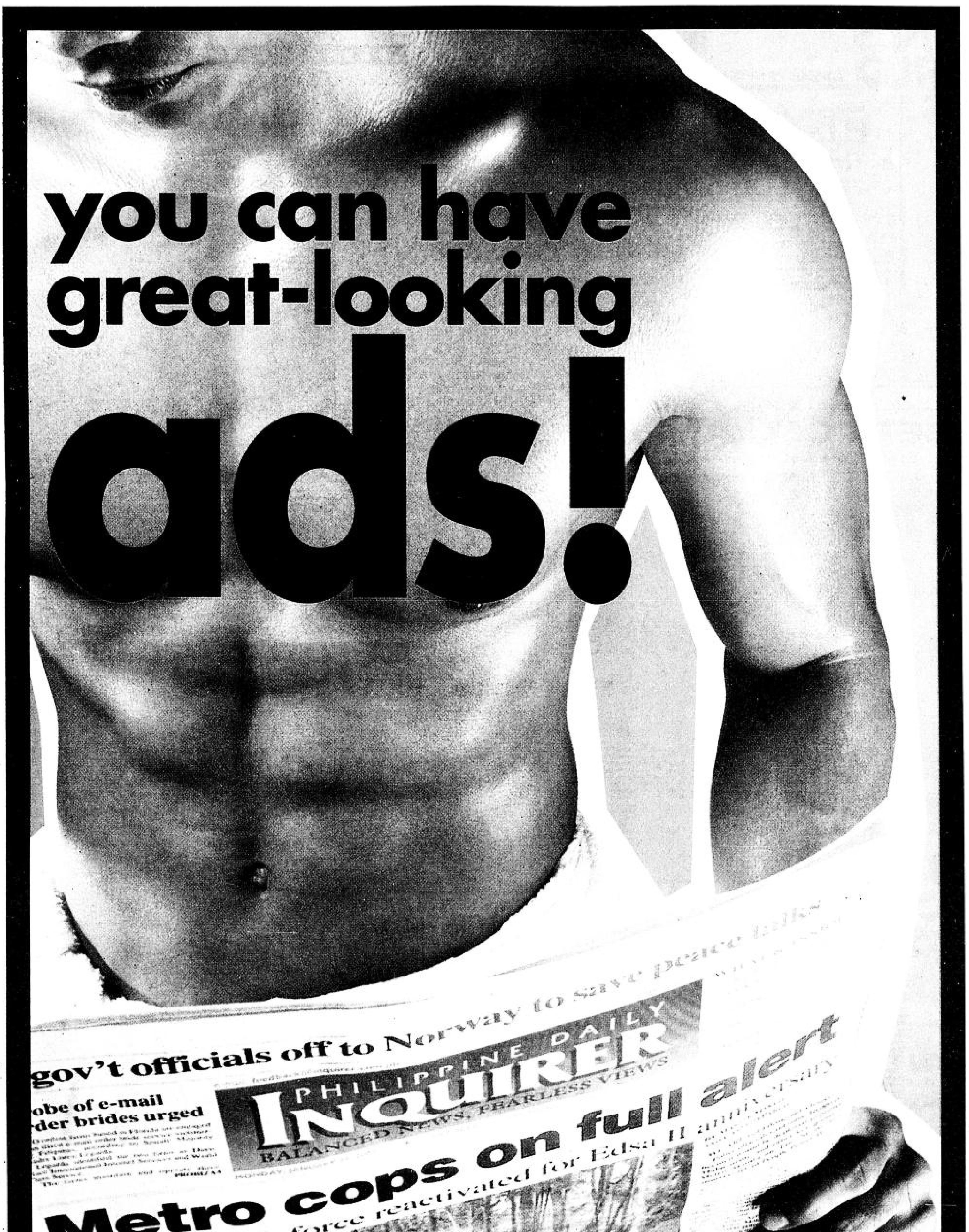
A good director knows that when he forces the viewer to fill in some of the blanks, it makes the viewer more active in the movie-watching experience.

Good, bad news

And what of the cliffhanger ending? The bad news is that the film does end without the hero completing his mission. It IS *bitin*.

The good news is that you'll only have to wait a year to see the next movie, "The Two Towers." If you can't wait that long, then you can read the book.

INSTANNT/ A21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Treasury bill rates fall further

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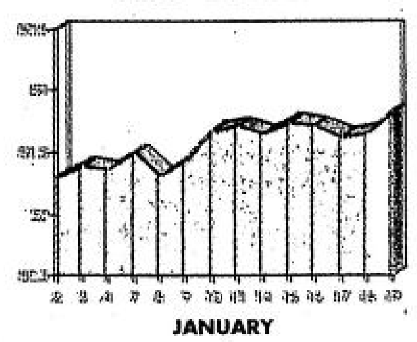


GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱ 51.18 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 21, 2002

¥ 132.38 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 21, 2002

GOLD:$282.90/283.40
per ounce Hong Kong,
Jan. 21, 2002

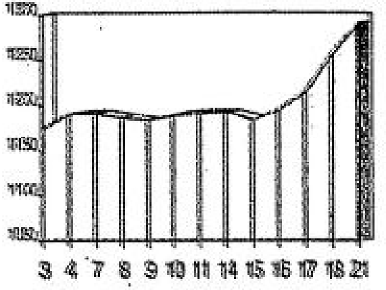
STOCK MARKET

Foreign buying lifts stocks

SHARE prices surged 2.6 percent yesterday on foreign buying of key blue chips led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and expectations of lower interest rates and inflation, brokers said.

"I think there's still some foreign buying trickling in; that's why the market is going up," said Teresa Lee Jahrling of Tower Securities.

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B5)

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 33.15 points to close at 1,290.63.

AFP, AP

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

TREASURY bill yields yesterday fell to new 15-year lows, prompting the government to renew its call on banks to bring down their lending rates to a level that would benefit even the small borrowers.

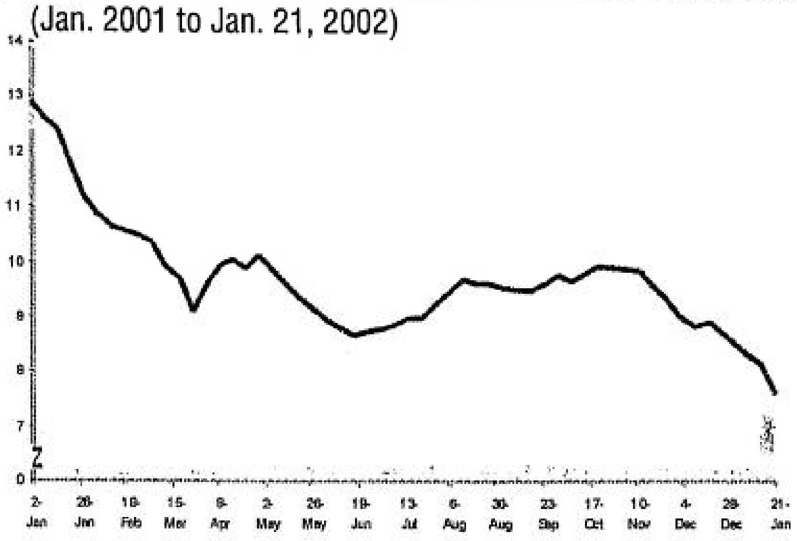
National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said treasury bill rates would continue to soften in the coming auctions and could even beat the 6.9-percent average recorded in February 1987.

Edeza explained that the fixed-income market naturally reacted to the decision of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to bring down its overnight rates by another quarter-of-a-percentage point as well as to cut bank reserve requirement by two percentage points.

"I think rates could still go down by 20 basis points in the coming auctions and the benchmark rate could fall close to 7 percent because the system is swamped with liquidity," Edeza said.

91-day Treasury bill rates

(Jan. 2001 to Jan. 21, 2002)



The 91-day treasury bill rate fell by 54.7 basis points to 7.594 percent, a fresh 15-year low for the benchmark rate which is normally used by banks in pricing their loans.

The rate of the longer-dated debt notes went down by 59.3 basis points to 8.064 percent for the 182-day and by 87.2 basis points to 8.545 percent for the one-year instruments.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho called on banks to bring down their lending rates so that the general public would benefit from the huge decline in domestic interest rates.

Banks continued to charge borrowers with a lending rate of about 13 percent. Normally, lenders should only charge borrowers a rate that is five percentage points above the 91-day treasury bill yield.

"I hope banks would make an adjustment in their loan spreads so the economy would really feel the decline in rates and so that it would benefit even the small borrowers," Camacho said.

The Bangko Sentral also reminded banks to observe the five-percentage-point mark-up it had committed to the government.

Edeza said the fixed-income market only factored in their bids yesterday the cut in overnight rates and a revision in the tiering system that effectively brought down the yield on banks' overnight place-

TREASURY/ B2

Unilever earmarks ₱1B for 2002 expansion

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

UNILEVER Philippines Inc. is forecasting another double-digit growth in sales this year as the food, home and personal care products remain immune to a slump in the domestic market.

Unilever Philippines president Howard Belton said he expected gross sales to jump 20 percent this year to P24 billion from P20 billion in 2001.

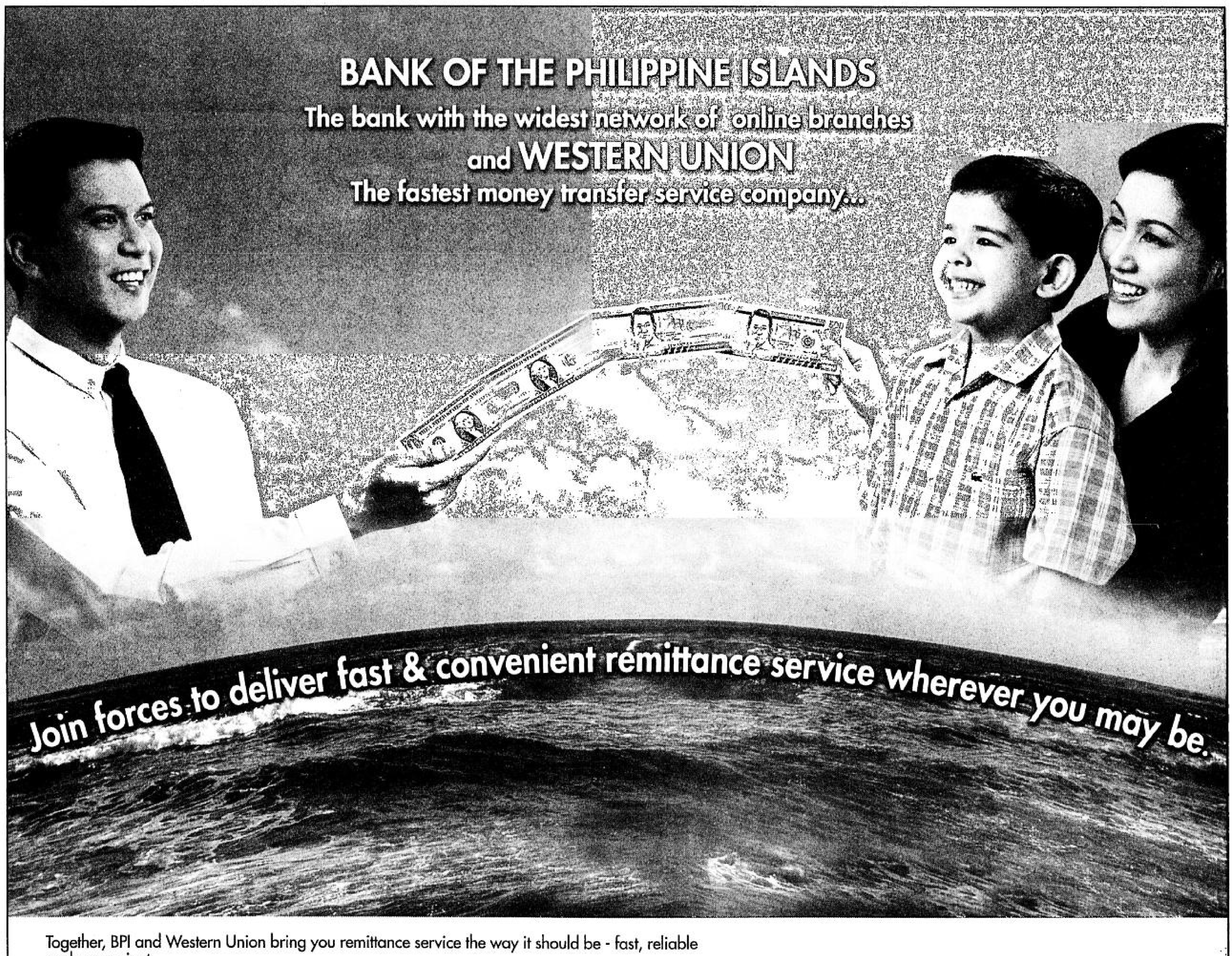
Belton said Unilever would spend another P1 billion this year to beef up its production capacity, broaden its distribution centers and step up its marketing efforts.

This expansion program would largely benefit Unilever's top brands in the home and personal care businesses such as Sunsilk shampoo, Creamsilk conditioner, Close-Up toothpaste, Rexona deodorant, Surf detergent powder, Pond's beauty products, Vaseline skin lotion, and Lifebuoy and Lux soap.

But Unilever is also stepping up its build-up of CMC (a joint venture with Ajinomoto), which distributes the Best Foods brand line such as Knorr food seasoning, Ladies' Choice dressing, and Royal pasta.

Van Hecke said Unilever would continue to spend more in its advertising and promotion activities in line with its plan to boost its brand names in the country.

UNILEVER/ B2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CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	-	100,000/105,000*
CAMP JOHN HAY	250,000	300,000
CANLUBANG	-	700,000
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	-
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	-	200,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	350,000/450,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100,000/150,000*
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90,000/150,000*260,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/350,000*/450,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	280,000	300,000/400,000*
MANILA GOLF CLUB/CORP.	-	13 M
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.6M	2,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	600,000	680,000
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	120,000/125,000*
MIMOSA IND./CORP.*	150,000	160,000/375,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C**/B*	600,000**	625,000**
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000/400,000**	230,000/425,000*
PUERTO AZUL A		135,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	-	220,000
RIVIERA A/B*	-	200,000/400,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	600,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	110,000/150,000*/180,000**
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	230,000/350,000*/450,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A	1,600,000	1,650,000
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	-	300,000/450,000*
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS CC/GOLF*	370,000/750,000*	375,000
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By Abigail L. Ho

MICROSOFT Great Plains, the business solutions arm of leading information technology company Microsoft Corp., said the Philippines remained key in its research and development efforts throughout the region and the world.

"We will continue to invest in the region. Manila is a major component of our global R&D (research and development) and support infrastructure," MSGP regional director for channel operations Richard Johnstone said in a briefing yesterday.

For the first half of its fiscal year starting in July, he said the company was on track in meeting its revenue and volume goals in the region.

"We were on our goal in terms of revenue for the first half. Our plan is to double our size in the Asia-Pacific region. We're on track to do that," he said.

He added that "the Philippines, as part of the East Asia region, is performing more or less in line with our other business units. The results we got are very strong."

Johnstone did not disclose any new investment numbers, but in terms of contributions to the Philippine economy, MSGP products and services regional director and Philippine managing director Joey Gurango said the business solutions firm was one of the Philippines' major taxpayers.

"Every month, we remit several million pesos in taxes to the government. I think we are making a significant contribution to the local economy," he said.

MSGP vice president for global development Darren Laybourne, however, said the company was looking at expanding its operations in the country in the next two to three years by hiring more personnel and leasing more office space.

"We have over 80 people in R&D. Including our support staff, we have over 200 employees. We will be expanding our office space and hiring additional personnel in the next few months. We will be making a fairly good-sized investment here in the next two or three years," he said.

MSGP recently launched the Microsoft.NET framework, which would help businesses here improve their interconnectivity.

Gurango added that the entry of this new framework would provide a venue for Filipino IT professionals to grow their talents instead of going abroad to do that.

"The biggest export of the Philippines is the IT talent. This is the case because there are not enough opportunities to grow their talent here. We would develop business opportunities through the Microsoft.NET framework that would make it possible for them to grow their talent here," he said.

Laybourne said the goal of Microsoft .NET was "to become a showcase of business applications" that would be the standard in computing in the near future.

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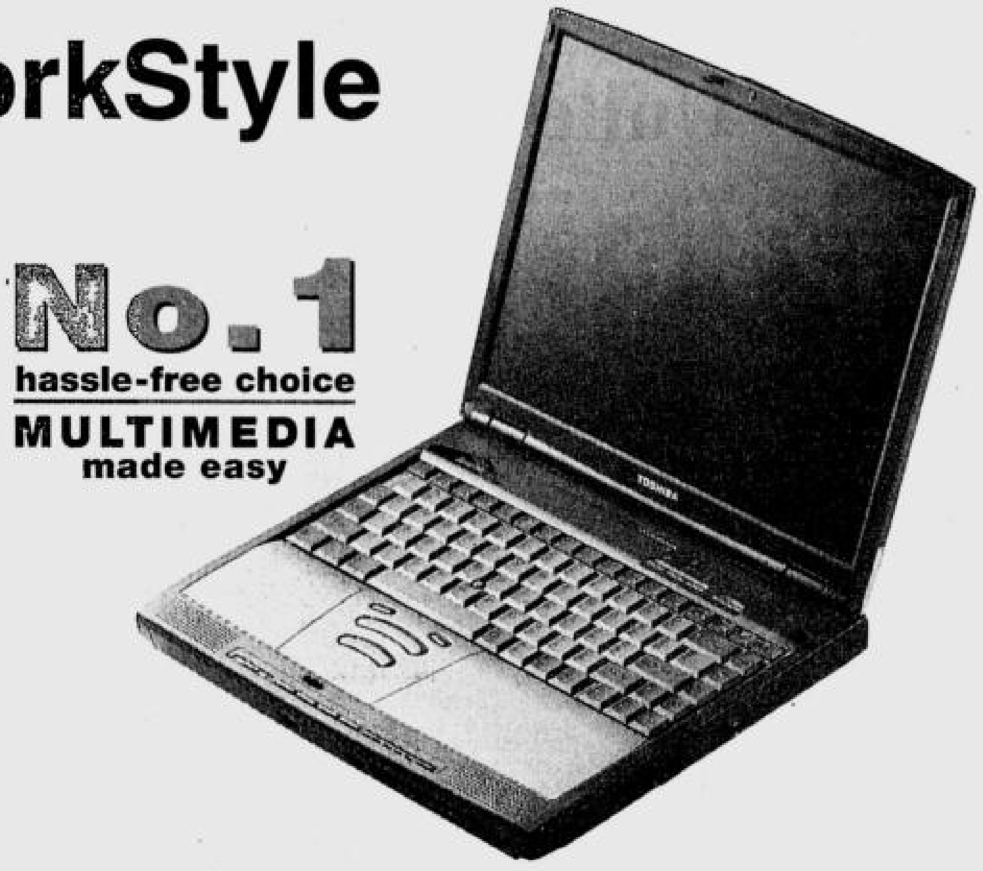

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25% of Napocor requirement met by bond float

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said the government had raised $250 million or a quarter of National Power Corp.'s financial requirements for 2002.

Perez, who is also vice chair of Napocor, said the amount was part of a $750-million bond issue of the national government.

"Originally, it was just $500 million for RP, but we decided it was a good opportunity to piggyback when we saw the overwhelming demand for Philippine risk," the secretary said.

The demand was almost $2 billion and the rate was "so tight" at 9.375 percent, he said.

The global bond issue has a tenor of 15 years. Investment house Credit Suisse First Boston is the lead underwriter and Morgan Stanley is the lead arranger.

Perez had earlier said Napocor needed $1 billion for its operating expenses for this year.

Asked how the balance would be raised, he said: "We are now in the silent period for the next bond issue, we cannot talk about it."

But he added that if they went ahead with another issuance, they did not have much to raise further because they could use the proceeds from the privatization of National Transmission Corp. to finance the balance.

Earlier, the president of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. said they planned to go ahead with an international roadshow for a $400-million bond issue for Napocor.

Created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Psalm is assuming all of Napocor's financial obligations as of end-2000 and taking over all of its disposable assets.

For his part, Perez was convinced that the power firm was in good shape in terms of finances.

"If we have the Transco proceeds, then we (might not even) have to borrow anymore," he said.

He also said the government was planning to do a pre-marketing roadshow in Europe and the United States at the end of this month for the Transco privatization.

Perez said they hoped to do this with President Macapagal-Arroyo when she leaves for London and New York at the end of the month until early February.

"We want to take advantage of this trip and hope to meet with prospective investors to promote the privatization of Transco," he said.

Unilever . . .

(From page B1)

Last year, Unilever bucked the economic slump with sales growing by more than 10 percent to P20 billion or better than its initial forecast of P19 billion.

Belton said that despite economic difficulties, Unilever continued to post sales increases partly because of its strategy of selling its products in small quantities through sachets.

He said the company was now reaping the dividends of its successful penetration of the Filipino masses to form a solid base for its everyday products such as shampoos and toothpaste.

He said 75 percent of the company's hair care products are sold in sachets while 45 percent of its skin care products are sold in these small silver packets.

Unilever is employing the same strategy in its local food subsidiary, California Marketing Co., which will sell mayonnaise, cheese spreads and the soon-to-be-launched catsup in sachets.

CMC vice president for marketing Kristien Van Hecke said the resilience of Unilever's sales in the face of tough economic conditions showed why foreign investors consider the country as a prime market for consumer goods. She said half of Unilever's sales in Southeast Asia come from the Philippines while its rival, Nestlé, counts the Philippines among its top 10 markets worldwide.

Treasury . . .

(From page B1)

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However, Edeza said the market would benefit from additional liquidity by March once the reserves that banks had placed with the BSP shall have matured. The two percentage point cut in the banks' mandated reserves would mean an additional P26 billion in loanable funds for locally operating lenders.

"The market has only priced the cut in overnight rates and the tiering. There is still momentum for rates to fall because banks have not liquefied their reserves yet," the national treasurer said.

The treasury, Edeza said, has more than P40 billion in free cash that it could use to finance the government's near-term requirement.

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CAMP JOHN HAY	250,000	300,000
CANLUBANG	-	700,000
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	-
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	-	200,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	350,000/450,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100,000/150,000*
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	60,000/150,000*280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/350,000*/450,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	250,000	300,000/400,000*
MANILA GOLF CLUB/CORP.	-	13 M
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QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	-	220,000
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BUSINESS SOLUTIONS ARM

Microsoft unit to expand in RP

By Abigail L. Ho

MICROSOFT Great Plains, the business solutions arm of leading information technology company Microsoft Corp., said the Philippines remained key in its research and development efforts throughout the region and the world.

"We will continue to invest in the region. Manila is a major component of our global R&D (research and development) and support infrastructure," MSGP regional director for channel operations Richard Johnstone said in a briefing yesterday.

For the first half of its fiscal year starting in July, he said the company was on track in meeting its revenue and volume goals in the region.

"We were on our goal in terms of revenue for the first half. Our plan is to double our size in the Asia-Pacific region. We're on track to do that," he said.

He added that "the Philippines, as part of the East Asia region, is performing more or less in line with our other business units. The results we got are very strong."

Johnstone did not disclose any new investment numbers, but in terms of contributions to the Philippine economy, MSGP products and services regional director and Philippine managing director Joey Gurango said the business solutions firm was one of the Philippines' major taxpayers.

"Every month, we remit several million pesos in taxes to the government. I think we are making a significant contribution to the local economy," he said.

MSGP vice president for global development Darren Laybourne, however, said the company was looking at expanding its operations in the country in the next two to three years by hiring more personnel and leasing more office space.

"We have over 80 people in R&D. Including our support staff, we have over 200 employees. We will be expanding our office space and hiring additional personnel in the next few months. We will be making a fairly good-sized investment here in the next two or three years," he said.

MSGP recently launched the Microsoft.NET framework, which would help businesses here improve their interconnectivity.

Gurango added that the entry of this new framework would provide a venue for Filipino IT professionals to grow their talents instead of going abroad to do that.

"The biggest export of the Philippines is the IT talent. This is the case because there are not enough opportunities to grow their talent here. We would develop business opportunities through the Microsoft.NET framework that would make it possible for them to grow their talent here," he said.

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World coconut prices seen higher this year

By CHRISTINE A. GAYLICAN

THE PHILIPPINE Coconut Authority said yesterday coconut oil prices in the world market would rise this year, helping prop up earnings from the country's top agriculture export.

In a news briefing, PCA Administrator Danilo Coronacion predicted that coconut oil prices would move up to $350 per metric ton this year from last year's average of $200 per metric ton.

Coronacion anchored his prediction on reports that coconut production had fallen due to a prolonged drought and "biological stress."

Three consecutive years of overproduction have exerted "biological stress" on the country's coconut trees, he said.

Coronacion estimates that the volume of production this year will hit 2.3 million metric tons of coconut oil, 21 percent lower than last year's forecast of 2.8 million MT.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines—a group of coconut producers, millers and traders—expects production to drop even further to 2.1 million MT, way below the industry's average output of 2.4 million MT.

In 2001, copra harvests allowed the Philippines to ship an estimated 1.39 million MT of coconut oil, up 34 percent from 1.036 million MT the previous year.

Coconut oil, which is extracted from dried coconut meat, is the country's biggest farm export product.

The value of the country's coconut product exports dropped 7.54 percent to $604.26 million last year from $653 million in 2000 due to a vegetable oil glut in the world market.

The PCA and Department of Agriculture have explored the possibility of promoting coconut oil as a product that can be used for non-traditional applications to lessen the sector's dependence on global market trends.

Coronacion said the domestic market currently absorbs about 20 percent of the coconut oil produced by the industry and used for commercial and industrial manufacturing purposes.

Seventy percent of the coconut oil produced locally are exported to the United States, Europe and Asia.

However, there is a vegetable supply glut that has dampened prices of coconut oil from a high $800 to $900 to a low of $245 per metric ton in the first quarter.

"We would want to develop the local market for CNO to at least lessen the impact of low world market prices on our industry. This was neglected before and we would want to make a difference on this area," Coronacion told the INQUIRER.

He said the government would pursue the marketing of coco-diesel and coco-bunker fuel as substitute for the expensive fossil fuels now being sold by local oil firms.

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HONDA

Japan bankruptcies slip, but debts balloon

TOKYO—Corporate bankruptcies in Japan slipped 2.9 percent in December from a year before, but debts left behind by failed businesses ballooned dramatically, a private credit research agency said Monday.

Some 1,505 businesses closed their doors last month with unpaid loans of 1.564 trillion yen ($11.85 billion), 88 percent more than in December 2000, Teikoku Databank Ltd. said.

For all of 2001, debts fell by 32.4 percent on year to 16.213 trillion yen ($122.83 billion) from the previous year's level. The number of cases climbed by 1.9 percent to 19,441.

Despite the full-year fall in debt, Teikoku Databank said 2001 still marked the second-worst year in corporate bankruptcies on record since World War II. The highest postwar level was in 1984, when a total of 20,841 cases of corporate failures were registered.

Business conditions have steadily worsened in Japan amid declining consumer spending, tightening credit and deflation, the agency said.

Two large companies listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's first section failed in December: general contractor Aoki Corp., with liabilities of 390 billion yen ($2.95 billion); and supermarket operator Kotobukiya Co., with debts of 213 billion yen ($1.61 billion).

Recession-related bankruptcies totaled 1,129 cases in December, or about three-quarters of the total.

Compared with November, bankruptcy debts dropped 16.9 percent, while the number of firms going under fell 18.7 percent, the agency said.

Japan is still struggling to emerge from an economic slowdown that has lasted more than 10 years and began with the burst of property and stock values in the late 1980s.

On Monday, the government submitted to Parliament for final approval a second extra budget totaling 2.5 trillion yen ($18.94 billion) to spur the sagging economy. The government wants to enact the budget under the current fiscal year ending March 31. *AP*

Japanese economy to deteriorate

TOKYO—Japan's economy is crumbling fast amid slack demand and falling prices, and will slump further as the government implements drastic structural reforms, Bank of Japan Governor Masaru Hayami said Monday.

"The economic deterioration is extensive, including a fall in exports and capital expenditure, as well as weak private consumption. Under these circumstances, prices will continue to be in a falling trend," Hayami said in speech to a quarterly meeting of BOJ regional managers.

Prices would continue to slide, as dire economic conditions forced companies to cut more jobs, pushing the unemployment rate higher. This would further dampen consumer sentiment, pressuring prices in a vicious cycle, he said.

A raft of structural reforms, advocated by the government to lift the nation out of recession, would further hurt the economy in the short term, Hayami said.

"The most important policy issue is that we should not lead (these economic pressures) to cause a deflationary spiral," he said.

Japanese banks, weighed down by a mountain of bad loans, must clean up their accounts to regain financial health, he said adding the central bank is already providing enough liquidity to the markets in case the financial system is destabilized by the process of bad debt write-offs. *AFP*

Taiwan jobless hit historic high of 4.5% in 2001

TAIPEI—Taiwan's 2001 jobless rate is estimated to have hit a historic high amid growing business closures and cutbacks, the United Daily News reported here Monday.

The island's unemployment rate last year reached 4.5 percent as the December rate remained high at over 5 percent, the paper quoted officials from the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics as saying.

But the December jobless figure was slightly lower than the 5.28 percent recorded in the previous month, said the DGBAS officials.

The DGBAS anticipated the country's unemployment would ease further ahead of the Lunar New Year in mid-February as some found work after the launch of the island's first computerized lottery earlier this month.

However, Taiwan's accession to the World Trade Organization could keep its unemployment at the 5-percent level amid fierce competition from foreign enterprises, the DGBAS officials said.

Slowing domestic and overseas demand has forced nearly 5,200 Taiwanese factories out of business last year as the economy hit bottom, according to the economic ministry.

Meanwhile, the number of newly registered plants in 2001 dropped 33.3 percent to 3,793 as more businesses scaled down investment in the face of weaker demand, it said.

Taiwan has slipped into a technical recession after its economy shrank 4.21 percent in the three months to September, the biggest quarterly fall in 26 years.

The economy is expected to shrink another 2.68 percent in the fourth quarter and contract 2.12 percent over the full year, according to government statisticians.

It would be the first contraction over a full year since Taiwan started measuring economic performance in 1951.

The DGBAS is due to release the 2001 unemployment figure on Wednesday. *AFP*

Official warns of more layoffs in Singapore

SINGAPORE—Singapore's labor minister has warned that the recession-hit country can expect more layoffs in the first three months of this year, a news report said Monday.

Also, preliminary results showed that last year's unemployment rate was higher than the government's originally projected 4.5 percent, The Straits Times newspaper quoted Manpower Minister Lee Boon Yang as saying.

This wealthy Southeast Asian city state is currently in the worst recession in its 36-year history, after decades of booming economic growth and negligible unemployment.

The tiny country of 4 million people has few natural resources and depends heavily on manufacturing and exporting electronic products. It faces growing competition in the industry from other Asian countries such as China.

Singapore has also been hit hard by the global economic downturn and by economic fallout from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in its biggest export market, the United States. *AP*

MATSUSHITA Corp. employee Kazuhiko Zushi displays the company's latest hi-tech toilet seat equipped with a body-fat analyzer to calculate the ratio from electric conductivity through the body and its remote control to display the ratio on the LCD. Matsushita will put it on the domestic market with a price of 98,000 yen ($750). AFP

ATM firms see huge demand in China

TOKYO—Japan's key automated teller machine makers said Monday that they were targeting sales in China to meet growing demand there in the run up to the Olympics.

Oki Electric Industry Co. Ltd., Hitachi Ltd. and Omron Corp. have set their sights on the Chinese market, where the number of ATMs is seen swelling to 150,000 machines by 2008 from 30,000 at present, spokespersons said.

"We are starting to build (and sell) ATM machines in China already," said Oki Electric spokesperson Akiko Horiguchi.

The firm's wholly owned Chinese unit, Oki Electric Industry (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., based in the south aims to build 10,000 machines in 2002 to be sold in China and also Japan.

"We aim mainly to sell them in the key cities such as Beijing and Shanghai where the demand is greatest," she said.

"Oki decided to build a plant in China because it is (more expensive) to operate in Japan. Also, we found that it's much better to have operations on the ground there when we plan to target the Chinese market."

Technology giant Hitachi has developed a core component for ATM machines to identify Chinese notes, which it will sell to US and European ATM makers, spokesperson Atsushi Kanno said. *AFP*

P&O Princess rejects raised Carnival offer

LONDON—Britain's P&O Princess Cruises Plc. on Monday spurned a second approach from the world's largest cruise operator, Carnival Corp., in favor of its agreed merger with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

P&O Princess said Carnival's revised, conditional offer of around 3.5 billion pounds ($5 billion) was still financially less favorable than the proposed merger with Royal Caribbean, and was also much less likely to clear regulatory hurdles.

As a result, it said it would not meet with Carnival to discuss its conditions.

The world's three largest cruise operators are locked in a bid battle as they seek cost-cutting alliances to counter a drop in ticket prices following the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, which chilled leisure businesses worldwide. *Reuters*

Amazon aims to make money for 1st time–sort of

SEATTLE—Amazon.com has made many groundbreaking moves in the scant six years it's been in business.

Now it's going for another first—making money.

The world's largest Internet retailer has said it aims to turn a pro forma operating profit in the fourth quarter ended Dec. 31. It reports earnings Tuesday.

That measure of profit excludes many expenses and is a long way away from true profitability. Analysts are still predicting the company will report a net loss of millions of dollars, and Amazon has not said when it expects to turn a net profit.

But Amazon executives and financial experts still say that meeting that pro forma operating profit target is critical.

"Investors are looking for some sort of proof that the economics of e-retailing or e-commerce make sense, and this is the milestone quarter for them," said Jeetil Patel, an analyst with Deutsche Banc Alex Brown in San Francisco.

It's also an important test of Amazon executives' credibility with Wall Street, said hedge fund manager Scott Reamer of Union Tree Capital Research in Denver.

"It's a psychological milestone for the Street if only because it was the one achievable thing that management set out to do earlier this year," Reamer said.

But Reamer cautioned: "It's not a real profit, and they've got a lot of debt. There's a long way from here and actual reported earnings."

Reamer thinks Amazon will likely meet the goal; Patel is confident the company will outdo itself.

Earlier this month, Patel said he thought Amazon would actually do better than originally expected in the fourth quarter, based on faster-than-expected growth in the company's international divisions and strong holiday sales. He is predicting a $15-million pro forma operating profit. *AP*

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Arthur Andersen still on top in Houston

HOUSTON—When it comes to the Big 5 accounting firms in Houston, Arthur Andersen LLP is clearly No. 1.

The Chicago-based company's outpost in the nation's energy capital audits the books of more than 40 of the top 100 public companies in the Houston area.

It served four of the city's eight largest corporations until Thursday, when Enron Corp. fired the firm amid revelations of suspicious accounting and document shredding.

Enron became the largest corporation in US history to file for bankruptcy last month, and its questionable bookkeeping practices have become the target of several investigations. Now the auditor is also in the spotlight and fending off lawsuits.

"Prior to the (1998) merger that formed PricewaterhouseCoopers, Andersen ranked every year the top firm of the other five to work for," University of Houston assistant accounting professor Scott Whisenant said. "I would even tell my students it's a great place to start a career."

As Houston emerged as the nation's oil center, Andersen became the city's top global accounting firm in the latter half of the century, with nearly 1,400 professionals serving more than 2,700 clients.

"They're extremely knowledgeable about the energy industry," said Joe Davis, chair and chief executive of Consolidated Graphics Inc., who worked at Andersen's Houston office for 11 years. "I think this is very unfortunate. That office has some of the smartest, hardest-working accountants I know."

Andersen's Houston office referred all calls to its headquarters. Spokesperson Patrick Dorton did not return a message left by The Associated Press.

One of Andersen's largest embarrassments before Enron also involved a company now based in Houston.

The Securities and Exchange Commission alleged Andersen inflated earnings on behalf of trash hauler Waste Management Inc., then based in Illinois. Waste Management in 1998 restated earnings from 1992-97, and Andersen paid Waste Management a settlement amount that never was disclosed.

Afterward, a Houston rival bought Waste Management and its headquarters was moved, although the company retained the name. Working with the Houston Andersen office, the company had to restate earnings further in 1999, Waste Management spokesperson Sarah Voss said.

Andersen paid Waste Management $20 million as a result of the second accounting failure, the company said last November. The two restatements cost the companies more than $600 million in lawsuit settlements.

Unlike Enron, however, Waste Management has stuck with Andersen.

"We have a whole new team, top to bottom, of auditors that works with us," Voss said.

Andersen, meanwhile, has been employing full-scale damage control over Enron, firing the chief auditor in Houston and stripping four partners of management responsibilities. It also took out full-page ads in major newspapers acknowledging "an error in judgment" by Andersen personnel and promising comprehensive changes.

Documents obtained by a congressional committee, one of 10 investigating the Enron collapse and Andersen's auditing, showed senior managers at Andersen raised concerns about Enron's accounting practices—and problems they might bring with the SEC—in February and considered dropping Enron as a client. The documents also said fees for managing the Enron account could reach $100 million a year and risks could be managed.

The fired Houston auditor, who has been working with investigators, suggested Andersen's lawyers were behind orders to shred documents.

Though documents showed Enron's peculiar finances were discussed as early as February, Andersen alumnus Davis said it was possible the Chicago headquarters was unaware of the extent of Enron's woes.

"I think Arthur Andersen is a very decentralized organization. The judgment of individual partners is a big factor," said Davis, who uses Andersen to audit his own books. "They can have certain oversights, but audits are done by individual people."

Andersen's chief executive, Joseph Berardino, said earlier in the week, "We're not quite sure yet" whether wrongdoing reached higher into the accounting firm than the auditors now being disciplined.

Berardino spent much of the week meeting with other clients to ensure their continued business.

Among dozens of Andersen clients contacted by The Associated Press, few were willing to discuss auditing plans and none spoke of plans to drop Andersen. But numerous Fortune 500 companies—among them International Paper, Merck & Co., Valero Energy Corp. and American Home Products—noted that retention hinged on the results of an annual review and then approval by the board and, often, shareholders. *AP*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, January 21, 2002)

(Stocks)	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.30	5.3	5.3	5.3	7,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62.00	65	62	65	1,074,600
Citystate Savings Bank	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	28.00	29.5	27.5	28	1,551,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	204.0	205	199	201	64,890
Philippine National Bank	65.00	66	65	66	27,400
Phil. Savings Bank	27.50	28.5	27.5	28.5	9,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.00	14	13	14	14,000
Security Bank Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17	134,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	16.25	17.5	16.25	17.25	453,400
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	120,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	.3300	.35	.33	.34	350,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1290	1290	1290	1290	4,060
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1025	1025	1020	1020	520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	28.00	28.5	28	28	14,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	.4600	.48	.44	.45	6,020,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	670.0	675	670	670	22,700
Island Info and Tech Inc.	.0270	.028	.027	.028	1,700,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	.3200	.32	.32	.32	100,000
Piltel	.3200	.32	.3	.31	720,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	.2100	.22	.21	.22	90,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	450.0	492.5	450	490	202,390
Ivantage Corp.	.5200	.52	.5	.5	270,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	.0210	.021	.02	.021	236,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. "A"	24.50	24.75	23.75	24	138,500
Manila Electric Co. "B"	34.50	35.5	34	34.5	2,589,200
Petron Corp.	1.80	1.92	1.8	1.9	21,906,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.80	2.8	2.65	2.75	3,599,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.50	1.5	1.5	1.5	4,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	.1900	.19	.19	.19	20,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	.3200	.33	.32	.33	570,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	7.00	7	7	7	7,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp. .	2.04	2.06	2.04	2.04	44,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.80	5.8	5.8	5.8	110,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.00	13.5	13	13	186,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	24.50	24.5	24	24.25	48,000
RFM Corp.	2.42	2.6	2.42	2.6	11,181,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	44.00	44.5	44	44.5	127,200
San Miguel Corp. "B"	56.00	58	56	57.5	336,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	61,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg "A"	.7300	.74	.72	.72	60,000
Ayala Corp.	5.80	6.3	5.8	6.1	13,178,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	1,900,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	.8600	.86	.84	.84	310,000
A. Soriano Corp.	.5200	.53	.52	.53	300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	.0070	.007	.007	.007	7,000,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	.1950	.2	.195	.2	270,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	.5900	.61	.58	.59	21,400,000
A Brown Company Inc.	.5000	.5	.5	.5	150,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	.1600	.16	.16	.16	40,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	.2450	.27	.235	.27	10,230,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	.1000	.1	.09	.09	2,000,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	.0350	.035	.035	.035	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.04	1.06	1,605,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	27.50	29.5	27.5	29.5	1,463,700
Global Equities Inc.	.1400	.14	.14	.14	200,000
Ionics Inc.	7.30	7.3	7.3	7.3	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.58	381,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	85,000
Megaworld Corp.	.8000	.82	.78	.79	5,990,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.3500	.35	.34	.34	3,920,000
Music Corp.	.2800	.3	.27	.28	4,910,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	.2000	.205	.2	.205	1,350,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	.8100	.81	.81	.81	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	.3700	.37	.35	.35	660,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	.1950	.195	.185	.185	910,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.3200	.32	.3	.31	1,240,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.40	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	.5000	.51	.5	.51	270,000
Pryce Corp.	.0600	.065	.06	.0625	1,600,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.5	294,000
Steniel Manufacturing	.5000	.5	.5	.5	20,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	.4500	.45	.45	.45	380,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	6.80	6.8	6.8	6.8	8,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.5200	.53	.5	.53	2,180,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	.3800	.45	.38	.45	20,000
Manila Jockey Club	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	1,300
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	28.00	29	28	28.5	548,400
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	700.0	700	700	700	400
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.96	1.96	1.84	1.84	251,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	675.0	675	675	675	1,100
Jollibee Warrants	12.50	12.5	12.5	12.5	10,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.00	10	10	10	300
Philweb.Com Inc –Warrants	.0060	.006	.0055	.005586,000,000	
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.80	6	5.7	5.7	8,269,000
C & P Homes Inc.	.2600	.26	.25	.25	6,640,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	.4800	.52	.48	.52	22,260,000
Empire East Land Inc.	.2800	.29	.27	.27	13,440,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.60	2.6	2.4	2.46	11,978,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	.2500	.25	.24	.24	850,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	.2000	.21	.2	.21	260,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	.0800	.08	.08	.08	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.80	6.8	6.7	6.8	9,692,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.0825	.0825	.08	.08	800,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	.3400	.34	.34	.34	10,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines "A"	.0270	.027	.026	.027	7,900,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. "A"	.1500	.15	.15	.15	200,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. "B"	.1600	.16	.16	.16	100,000
Manila Mining Corp. "A"	.0036	.0036	.0036	.0036	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0036	.0036	.0036	.0036	10,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	.0170	.017	.017	.017	6,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. "A"	.2200	.22	.22	.22	60,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	.2450	.25	.245	.25	230,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	.1000	.1	.1	.1	30,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	.0180	.019	.018	.019	9,000,000
Interport Res. "B"	.0040	.0042	.004	.0042	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "A"	.0060	.0065	.006	.006	135,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "B"	.0060	.0065	.006	.0065	69,000,000
Pacifica	.0160	.016	.016	.016	15,400,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	3,812,870	145,076,530.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	458,160,290	499,413,020.00
PRO	74,509,000	159,742,600.00
Mining	25,530,000	472,500.00
OIL	230,400,000	1,706,100.00
GRAND TOTALS :	792,412,160	806,410,750.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	535.17	UP 17.14
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,750.28	UP 52.98
PRO	572.50	DOWN 5.64
Mining	1,068.94	DOWN 14.58
OIL	2.08	UP 0.15
All Shares Index	712.84	UP 3.82
Composite	1,290.63	UP 33.15

NO. OF ADVANCES: 45; NO. OF DECLINES: 33; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 32; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 110 NO. OF TRADES: 5,089

CURRENCIES

Jan. 21, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.130582	1.000000	51.4060
Japan	Yen	0.008529	0.007544	0.3878
United Kingdom	Pound	1.626343	1.438500	73.9475
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144970	0.128226	6.5916
Switzerland	Franc	0.680376	0.601793	30.9358
Canada	Dollar	0.700311	0.619425	31.8422
Singapore	Dollar	0.616457	0.545256	28.0294
Australia	Dollar	0.581875	0.514668	26.4570
Bahrain	Dinar	2.999051	2.652661	136.3627
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301489	0.266667	13.7083
Brunei	Dollar	0.614781	0.543774	27.9532
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025718	0.022748	1.1694
UAE	Dirham	0.307893	0.272331	13.9994
Korea	Won	0.000863	0.000763	0.0392
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.884500	45.4686
Brazil	Real	0.464455	0.421053	21.6447
Denmark	Kroner	0.134541	0.119046	6.1197
India	Rupee	0.023165	0.020790	1.0687
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.294235	0.263193	13.5297
Mexico	New Peso	0.121262	0.109619	5.6351
New Zealand	Dollar	0.473665	0.423549	21.7730
Norway	Kroner	0.125699	0.111761	5.7452
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018679	0.016694	0.8582
South Africa	Rand	0.097808	0.087719	4.5093
Sweden	Kroner	0.108132	0.095708	4.9200
Syria	Pound	0.021877	0.022883	1.1763
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032006	0.028629	1.4717
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001466	0.001311	0.0674

NEW, EXPANSION PROJECTS

Empire East to spend ₱1B in 2002

By Doris C. Dumlao

EMPIRE East Land Holdings Inc., the middle-market housing arm of property developer Megaworld Corp., has earmarked P1 billion in capital expenditures for this year to jumpstart new property projects and expand existing ventures.

In an interview yesterday, ELI president Charlemagne Yu said the capital outlay, all from internally generated funds, would be used to continue the 70-hectare expansion of its Laguna Bel-Air project and the development of its 7.4-hectare Cambridge township project in Pasig.

The P1-billion budget for capital outlays for this year, Yu said, stood at par with the funds spent for expansion last year.

"We're still focusing on the middle-income segment because there's a void in this market while other property developers are concentrating on the high-end market segment," Yu said.

Yu noted that the middle-income segment, which he defined as the market which could afford housing units worth P500,000 to P3 million, remained robust since 1989, despite the slump triggered by the Asian currency turmoil of 1997.

"Sales are quite fast compared to socialized or high-end market," he said.

Yu also said that aside from the Laguna Bel-Air and the Cambridge projects, ELI was continuing its marketing efforts for remaining units in urban housing projects California Garden Square in Mandaluyong City and Xavier Hills in Greenhills.

In the case of the Laguna Bel-Air project, Yu said this would be the third phase of expansion, which would be equal to the size of Laguna Bel Air 2 and 3 projects combined. He said 2,500 units would be sold.

In the case of the Cambridge Township project, he said 4,000-5,000 units with an average size of 40 square meters would be sold at P800,000 to P900,000. He said the project, which would be launched sometime in the first quarter of the year, would be completed in five years.

It was earlier estimated that the Cambridge Township project would cost at least P5 billion.

Yu also said ELI would not pursue any new borrowings for this year and would instead fund most of the projects through proceeds from preselling activities.

DISCLOSURES

ASIATRUST Development Bank Inc. declared a P0.30 per share cash dividend in favor of stockholders as of Jan. 2, 2002.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 27, 2 p.m. at the Ballroom of Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig City. Only stockholders as of Jan. 8 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

JG Summit Holdings Inc. confirmed plans of investing about P15 billion for the expansion of its food, property and telecommunications businesses.

* * *

PHILWEB.Com Inc. announced the election of Jenjen Song of the **American International Group** into the board of the company.

* * *

CONCRETE Aggregates Corp. announced the vacancy in one out of 11 seats in the board of the company following the resignation of Cristina Samaniego. Also, Ferdinand Armonia retired as mining division head.

* * *

ROBINSONS Land Corp. and **Universal Robina Corp.** created the position of chair emeritus with John Gokongwei Jr. assuming the position. James Go was elected chair and chief executive officer while Lance Gokongwei was elected president and chief operating officer. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

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Baguio Country Club	750,000	600,000
Camp John Hay	300,000	250,000
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	-
Calatagan Golf	90,000	-
Canyon Woods	230,000	190,000
Canlubang	650,000	-
Celebrity Sports	230,000	170,000
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4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	700,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	125,000	115,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	210,000	190,000
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	380,000	350,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	250,000	200,000
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	220,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	375,000	340,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	230,000	210,000
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
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18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	400,000	
19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	15,000,000	12,000,000
20. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,800,000	
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	650,000	
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28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	370,000	
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	200,000
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31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	350,000	230,000
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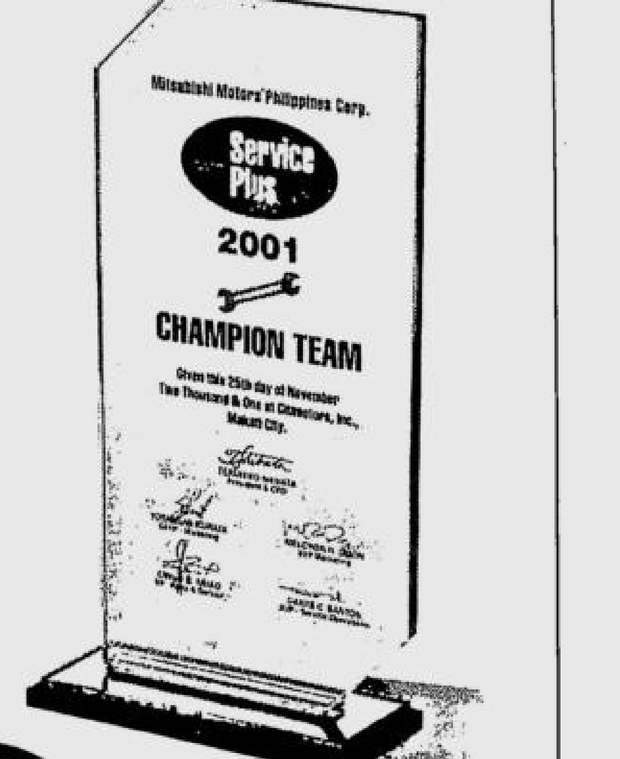

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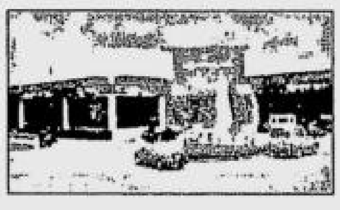

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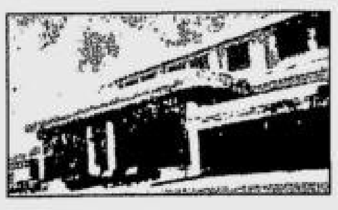

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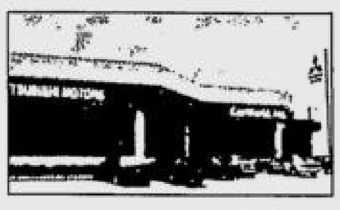

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RODRIGO R. DUTERTE
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By:

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(PDI -- Jan. 22, 2002)

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Notice is hereby that the estate of the deceased AGUSTIN LAGUDA SOTTO, of Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, who died on April 24, 2001, has been the subject of an Affidavit of Adjudication executed by his sole heir, Aida Laguda Sotto, in a document executed on November 24, 2001 and notarized by Notary Public Atty. Jose Sta. Ana and entered in his Notarial Register as Doc.No. 128; Page No. 26; Book No. 58; Series of 2001 (PDI-Jan.8,15&22, 2001)

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INQUIRER TRIVIA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

CAT scan

Q. Why does 'CAT' in 'CAT scan' mean?

A. CAT stands for "Computerized Axial Tomography." A CAT scanner rotates 180° around a patient's body, sending out a pencil-thin X-ray beam at 160 different points. Crystals positioned at the opposite points of the beam pick up and record the absorption rates of the varying thickness of tissue and bone. These data are then relayed to a computer that turns the information into a three-dimentional picture on a screen. Using the same dosage of radiation as that of the conventional X-ray machine, an entire "slice" of the body is made visible with about 100 times more clarity. The procedure is painless and takes only a few minutes. The scanner was invented in 1972 by the British electronics engineer Godfrey N. Hounsfield. Tomography, by the way, is the term given to a type of X-ray photography in which parts of the body in front of, or behind, the part under examination are not shown.

For the Record. Cats can see in almost total darkness. They have a special layer of cells in the retina (called *tapetum lucidum*), which acts like a mirror, reflecting any available light back to the cat's eye. This reflected light, known as eyeshine, is what makes a cat's eyes glow in the dark.

Past Forward. This day in 1949: Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung (now spelled 'Mao Zedong') marched into Peking (now Beijing) at the head of a battle-hardened guerilla army to make the Communists virtual masters of China. The vanquished Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek appealed for immediate peace talks, but Mao contemptuously dismissed the appeal.

WORD WATCH

Apila : from the Spanish *apelar*, 'to appeal.'

PDI – January 22, 2002

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ATTY. MARIANO "BUNNY" UNTALAN ABANILLA

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 20, 2002
at the age of 71.

His loving wife **Nenita**; children **Jojie** and **Chet**, **Tenette** and **Rico**, **Moyette** and **Bernard**, **Jim** and **Joy**, **Joseph**, **Jeff** and **Marie**; grandchildren **Jordan**, **Dylan**, **Allan**, **Nicole**, **Mark**, **James**, **Ryan**, **Bryan**, and **Stephannie**; brothers, sisters and in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Premiere of Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 27, 2002 after the Holy Mass at 10:00 a.m. at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

The family of the late

Atty. MARCIAL P. LAGUNZAD, JR.

who passed away on January 20, 2002
at the age of 73.

Wishes to inform relatives and friends that his body lies in state at Chapel C-12, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 24, 2002 at Holy Cross Memorial Park, San Bartolome, Quezon City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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Our Dearly Beloved Mother

CORONA F. JIMENEZ

of Lopez, Quezon and Quezon City

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on January 16, 2002 at the age of 91.

Her late husband **Judge Damian L. Jimenez** (†), (RTC) of Agoo, La Union & Quezon City; children, children-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Edsa, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Funeral Mass will be on Wednesday, January 23, 2002, at 8:00 a.m. Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

GUADALUPE FUSTER VILLAFLOR

December 12, 1909 - January 20, 2002
Died on January 20, 2002 at the age of 92.

Her children **Faustina**, **Roberto**, **Aurora**, **Lucina**, **Amador**, **Nilo**, **Teresita**, **Maria Socorro**; and sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on January 23, 2002 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord." Matthew 10:39

"I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in Me, will live,
even though he dies; and whoever
believes in Me will never die."
John 11: 25-26

In Loving Memories

LUCIA " Nanay Lucing" INTON Vda. De VIACRUSIS

December 13, 1924 - January 22, 1999
*On her **Third Death Anniversary***

Her children **Cesar** and **Belen**, **Ding** and **Miriam**, **Bot** and **Nessy**, **Beng**, **Jess** and **Rosie**, **Chie** and **Tess**, **Boy** and **Erma**, **Viring** and **Ave**, **Bong** and **Lea**; and her grandchildren **Vic**, **Jun**, **Albert**, **Jean**, **Rachelle**, **Mydee**, **Paul**, **Randy**, **Eric**, **Hernan**, **Tek**, **Lorie**, **Jay R**, **Mutya**, **Anne**, **Leo**, **Francis**, **Andy**, **Beth**, **Lucia Rin**, **Christian**, **Matty**, **AJ**, **Janet** and **Andrea Beatrice**; her great grandchildren and other relatives and friends to remember her in their prayers.

The Holy Mass will be offered at the following Churches on January 22, 2002.

St. Joseph Parish, Olongapo City	6:00 AM
St. Columban Church, Olongapo City	6:00 AM
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Barretto, Olongapo City	6:30 AM
Carmelite Monastery, Subic Zambales	7:30 AM
St. Anthony's Parish, Matain, Subic Zambales	6:30 AM
Sta. Rita Chapel, Philam Village	6:00 AM
San Tancrasio, Caloocan City	6:00 AM
St. Catherine, Samal, Bataan	6:00 AM
Our Lady of Sorrows, San Fernando, Pampanga	6:00 AM
Lord's Ascension Parish, San Fernando, Pampanga	8:00 AM

(Mass to be held at Filmixco Compound, Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga at 8:00 AM)

GILBERT MA. FORT DONATO

Passed away peacefully in the Grace of the Lord
*and joined his wife **RESURRECCION**,*
on January 21, 2002 at the age of 68.

His bereaved children **Francisco**, **Judith**, **Johanna**, **John Gilbert** & **Lawrence**; their respected spouses and the rest of the family request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel 2, St. Alphonsus de Liguori Parish, Magallanes, Makati City.

Daily Masses will be said at 8 PM until the Requiem Mass on Thursday, January 24, 2002 at 9 AM.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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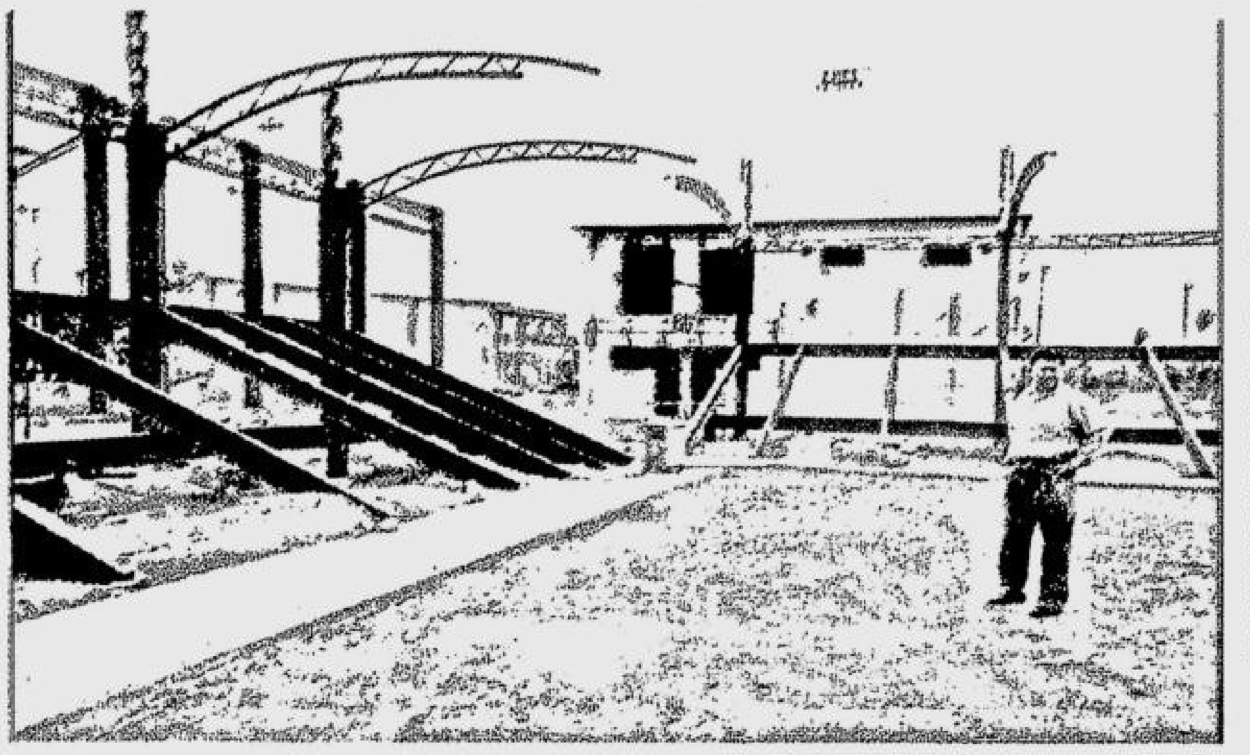
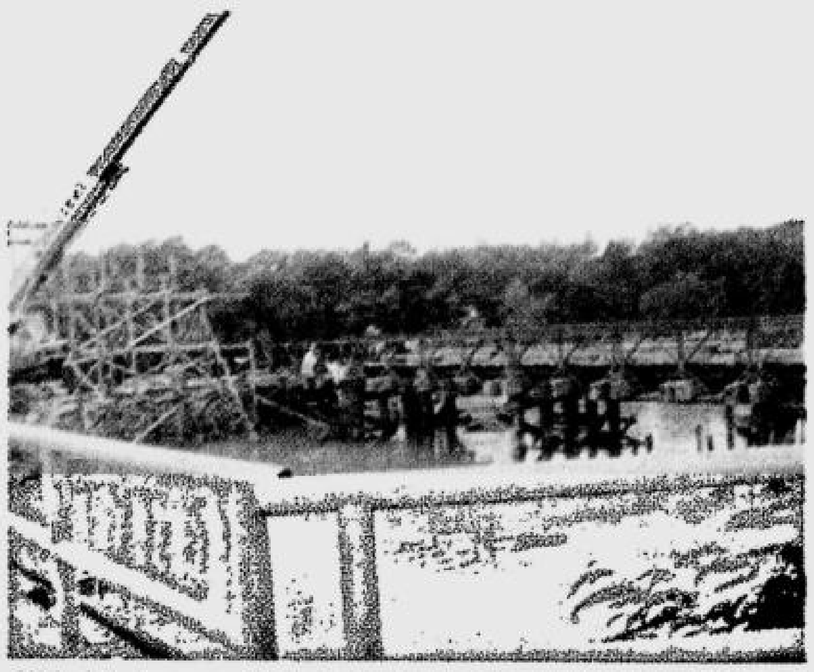
REAL ESTATE
CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT

₱800M in infra projects in full swing

BY JERRY ESPLANADA


SBMA chair Felicito Payumo inspects one of the ongoing projects at the Freeport.


ONE of the two new bridges being built at the Freeport.

SOME P800 million worth of infrastructure projects are in full swing at the Subic Bay Freeport, according to the head of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

The projects will "pave the way for future development efforts aimed at strengthening Subic's status as a catalyst of growth in Central Luzon," said SBMA chair Felicito Payumo.

Infrastructure projects

In a report to Malacañang, Payumo said the projects include the widening of the Rizal-Argonaut Highway, which is being undertaken by contractor AM Oreta under a P533-million contract.

The road project involves the expansion of the two-lane highway to a four-lane avenue and the construction of an extension road to the Tipo Expressway, Subic's entry point to Metro Manila.

It also includes the construction of two new bridges and the rehabilitation of four existing ones.

"With a total length of 7.01 kilometers, the new road will have direct access to Subic's major seaport and airport facilities. It will be the precursor to the planned Subic-Clark Toll Road Project which aims to link the two economic zones via an effective land-sea-air transportation network," said Payumo, a former Bataan legislator.

Port, airport facilities

Once the road project is completed, Payumo said the new road "will effectively provide access to port facilities that are currently up for development." He was referring to the P450-million modern grains bulk handling facility to be developed by the firm Mega-Equipment International Corp. at the Leyte wharf and a P160-million fertilizer cargo terminal of Tacoma Integrated Port Services Corp. at the Freeport's Boton area.

Likewise, the Cubi Point area will be developed into a modern container terminal port while existing port facilities at the Naval Supply Depot and Boton areas will be upgraded under the Subic Port Development Project to be bankrolled by a $215-million special yen loan package from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The Subic Bay International Airport is currently upgrading its runway and other facilities to meet Category II level standards and make it at par with the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Metro Manila.

Other infrastructure projects in the Freeport include the P107-million road maintenance project of the firm Pentagon Industrial Corp. and the P80-million sanitary landfill project, also funded by the JBIC.

New investors

Meanwhile, the economic crisis did not prevent new investors and companies currently based at SBMA from investing in the Freeport.

Last year, a total of 142 new lease and sublease agreements were approved by the SBMA, which also renewed during the same period 226 existing investments.

The US firm Kellog, Brown and Root (KBR), said to be the world's largest service contractor, has committed initial investments of P100 million.

The American company will soon start hiring some 1,000 blue-collar workers as it starts upgrading Subic Bay ship repair and maintenance facilities.

There's more good news. According to Payumo, up to 3,000 additional workers will be needed when KBR's operations go full blast.

Payumo and his KBR counterpart, Thomas Crum, had earlier signed a memorandum of agreement on the American firm's entry into the freeport, one of the deals forged during President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's recent trip to Washington.

KBR has a long experience in managing and operating vessels as well as the repair of maritime assets, Payumo said.

KBR's affiliate in the country, Haliburton International Inc., took part in the construction of the production platform of the Malampaya Gas Project, done entirely at Subic Bay.

Adding to the Freeport's diversification into "nonelectronics value-added industries" is its Jewelry City Project with the Guild of Philippine Jewelers.

A 20-hectare lot at the Gateway to Subic will be the site for the guild's manufacturing and display center.

High employment rate

Payumo also reported that during the first year of the Macapagal administration, the Freeport hired 19,663 workers, a 44-percent increase over the 14,614 jobs generated during the same period in 2000.

The employment figure brought to 45,742 the total workforce in the Freeport, which was down to 7,756 workers when the current SBMA administration took over in 1998.

"The high employment rate was the result of an increase in hiring by major manufacturing and service companies," said the SBMA chair.

From 449 firms in 2000, the number grew to 629 last year. Manufacturing companies like Wistron Infocomm (Phils.) Corp., formerly Acer, maker of personal computers and laptops, and its suppliers topped the list of companies, which hired additional workers.

From 70,000 units, Wistron increased its production volume in November last year to 130,000 units with a value of $113 million.

Japanese firms Sankyo Seiki, Juken Sangyo, Sanyo Denki and Nippon Ceramics also contributed to the high employment rate.

Increase in exports

For the third consecutive year, the Freeport breached the $1-billion level for exports even with the softening of the electronics industry.

During the last quarter of 2001, Subic registered a 27-percent increase in exports compared to the same period during the previous year. This brought the total export value for 2001 to $1.08 billion which was slightly lower than the 2000 figure of $1.23 billion.

But the Freeport "remains a top contributor in export earnings compared to other major ports in the country. We expect better figures this year when big companies like Sankyo Seiki go full swing in their operations," Payumo said.

Revenue collections, meanwhile, improved significantly last year. According to an SBMA report, combined collections of duties and taxes by the Bureaus of Internal Revenue and Customs amounted to P3.57 billion, an 85-percent increase over the 2000 total of P1.93 billion.

A 35-percent increase in the government's collection of the 5 percent tax on the gross income of Freeport enterprises and other income taxes was realized at the end of 2001. From collections of P554.5 million in 2001, revenues went up to P747.7 million last year.

Batangas solon supports drive to ban asbestos

REP. Oscar L. Gozos (4th District, Batangas) of the ecology committee has appropriated P2 million from his Priority Development Assistance Fund and authorized the changing of the asbestos roofing of the public market in Rosario, Batangas, with health-friendly roofing material.

Gozos allotted the funds as he committed to fully support the campaign to eliminate the use of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in the country.

"The harmful effects of asbestos to health are real and dreadful, hence, a strong resolve to abruptly abate the silent menace is imperative at this point," Gozos said.

Assurance

In a letter to Antonio Hombrebueno, president of the Foundation for National Development, Gozos said he is "please to know that the FND is at the forefront of an uphill struggle to make the Philippines an asbestos-free country."

Gozos also assured the FND, "The elimination of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) ranks high in my hierarchy of priorities."

Sen. Juan Flavier, during his watch as health secretary, had also warned Filipinos against exposure to the dreadful material, after confirming its lethal effects on dock workers at the former Subic Naval base.

Warning

Earlier, Rep. Prospero Nograles Jr. (First District, Davao City), chair of the powerful House committee on housing and urban development, declared his support "to probe deeper into the revelations on the health risks posed by asbestos-containing products," after warning manufacturers in their attempt at "hair-splitting."

Nograles said there should be no middle ground on anything that is harmful, citing the adverse effects on health caused by asbestos.

"Much evidence has been shown around the world, and we want to establish facts and figures on the dangers posed by asbestos," he said

Advocate

The campaign calling for the total ban of asbestos in the country was first voiced by the FND. Former Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) chair Perfecto R. Yasay Jr. echoed the call and has since then become one of the leading advocates of the movement urging the government to enforce a total ban on asbestos in the country.

The movement is fast gaining support from various sectors, especially in the construction industry, non-government organizations and other industries.

THE LEISURE FARMS LIFESTYLE

OCULAR INSPECTION

Alfred Xerez-Burgos Jr. (left), president of Landco Pacific and concurrent director of Leisure Farms, welcomes Presidential Adviser for Agricultural Modernization Angelito Sarmiento during a brief visit at the Leisure Farms properties in Tagaytay and Batangas and discusses the expansion and eco-tourism program.

TOPPING-OFF CEREMONIES

Premier urban property developer Megaworld Corp. recently completed the 30-story structural shell of its Cyber One office building development in Eastwood City CyberPark in Quezon City. At the topping-off rites are, from left, Kingson Sian, president of Eastwood CyberPark Corp.; Al Bustos, assistant manager of Data Center Operations Department of the Social Security System; Antonio Maralit, vice president of DCOD-SSS; Juanchito Bernardo, president of J.D. Bernardo Engineering Construction; Rogelio Menguito, structural engineer of RIMA Partners Co.; Lawrence Raule, head architect of Design Alliance; and Efren Torres, construction manager of Megaworld Corp.

No. 1 termiticide in US, Australia, Japan now available in Philippines

YOUR home is your biggest investment. But without effective termite control, it can turn into your biggest expense. Bayer, a leading name in home protection products around the world, recognized the problem and has come out with a termiticide called Premise SC.

Worldwide, this product has undergone numerous, extensive field studies. In fact it has even gone through what is called "real-world" performance trials. These studies confirmed the excellent performance of Premise SC on all termite species, varying soil types and pH levels, and the different construction formats. Now, in partnership with 36 pest management professionals or pest control operators (PCOs), Bayer Philippines is launchings Premise SC, a revolutionary termite control system that offers a unique dual mode of action for maximum and reliable results.

Not termite repellent

According to Bayer regional technical manager for Asia and Australia Graeme Smith, unlike all other termiticides in the market today, Premise SC does not repel termites. Instead, it brings them to a treated zone where they are poisoned and killed.

Explains Smith: "Other termiticides provide only a barrier. This ends up being a temporary solution because the termites can always find the tiniest gaps or other entry points into the house."

He points out that while other termiticides have only one mode of action, Premise SC has two. First, its active ingredient, imidacloprid, intoxicates termites on contact, thus stopping feeding instantly. Termites exposed to high concentrations are killed on the spot in minutes. Those that get sub-lethal doses, like those that are at the edges of the treated zone, stay there and get confused, unable to eat and groom themselves or the others. The second mode of action is Premise SC working with nature. The confused, dysfunctional termites become infected with diseases and fungi in the soil that cause them to die. The sick termites are unable to feed and care for the needs of the colony.

In the Philippines, Smith said there are four most destructive species of *anay* (termite). An effective termite control system should work on all four, which Premise SC does successfully.

Formulation

What also sets Premise SC apart is its formulation. As a suspension concentrate, it is moderately water-soluble, giving it excellent ability to do lateral soil movement. Premise SC can be applied as a liquid or as a foam. Foam application comes in handy for hard-to-reach areas like under slabs or other crevices.

The active ingredient of Premise SC is quite specific to insects and is thus classified as low-risk and will not harm people, pets or wildlife. It is odorless and has no airborne residues that could irritate anybody. In fact, one can stay in the house that is undergoing a Premise treatment.

Because of the product's superior features, it continues to be the No. 1 brand in the United States, Australia, Japan and in other parts of the world. In all these countries, Bayer recognizes the value of the professional pest control operator. It takes a trained eye, equipment and expertise to launch an effective termite treatment program. And to ensure that homeowners get only the best service, Bayer has trained 36 PCOs in the country as the accredited Premise SC applicators.

San Francisco Victorian homes now in RP suburbs

TALK about one of the most bewitching places to live in and for sure San Francisco will be tops. With its pulsating cosmopolitan life that seamlessly blends with quaint but spellbinding architecture on top of its rich tapestry of culture and diversity, it's really hard not to fall in love with San Francisco.

Apart from cable cars and the infamous Alcatraz, the city of San Francisco is renowned for its Victorian style houses, regarded as elite art designed by shelled architects using unique colors and shapes. These Victorian homes are decorative and functional as well as they make the most out of the space available, making the homes appealing and comforting to the viewers, visitors and dwellers.

Latest masterpiece

The grandeur of Victorian architecture is captured in Brittany's latest masterpiece called La Posada. But make no mistake about it. La Posada isn't just about having a piece of entrancing San Francisco in the Philippines. It is envisioned as a part of Brittany Bay City, a cyber city complete with an activity area and commercial establishments.

La Posada's Victorian homes are perched on rolling hills that offer a sweeping view of the majestic Laguna Bay.

Postcard perfect

Said Brittany general manager Jing Serrano: "Imagine a postcard-perfect neighborhood with your choice home set amid the glorious bounty of nature every waking morning, with the comforts of city life to boot. Brittany's La Posada is a testament to Brittany's steadfast commitment to deliver value-for-money investments."

A walkable community laden with amenities, La Posada is a feast for the senses. It comes with the standard features Brittany projects have been known for—the comfort of open spaces, the serenity of cluster communities and exquisite landscaped gardens. It is also accessibly situated on the South Super Highway, just 10 minutes away from the Sucat Interchange and 20 minutes drive from Makati.

Moldex hosts business opportunity meeting

MOLDEX Realty Marketing Inc. will host a business opportunity meeting with people engaged in real estate selling on Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. at the Fishing Village Restaurant corner Padre Faura and Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila.

Editha L. Manansala, MRMI president, said the meeting aims to brief real estate agents, brokers and other sales practitioners on the advantages and rewards of realty selling and how it can help contribute to the nation's progress. The company has sales positions with highly competitive compensation and benefits packages available to qualified sales people. For inquiries, call up the MRMI at 832-7777 and 551-2201.

MRMI is the exclusive marketing arm of Moldex Realty Inc. and Moldex Land Inc. About 19 medium to high-end residential lot and house-and-lot projects, including a residential condominium called 1322 Roxas Boulevard, are being marketed by the company.

New hotel taps OFW market

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

NEWLY arrived overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and even those who are yet to go abroad will now have a new option when staying here in Metro Manila. Last week, Kabayan Hotel, the country's first hotel designed for the OFWs, officially opened for business, offering the country's premier dollar-earner a fitting homage.

The six-story hotel boasts of a mix of 80 hotel rooms and 130 dormitory beds. A hotel room will cost only P899 while a dorm bed will be pegged at P199 a day.

OFW friendly

The three-star hotel, managed by the Legend Hotels International, is dubbed "OFW-friendly" since it's the only hotel that caters primarily to this particular market. "This is the first of its kind in the Philippines," said hotel president Nelson Napud pointing out that it is so far the only hotel built for the OFWs and travelers with limited budget.

Apart from the it's affordable rates, Kabayan Hotel offers a "five-star" hotel service including OFW assistance and business center, free airport transfer service, and a food and beverage selection highlighting famous recipes from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Strategic location

Located just beside the foot of MRT Taft station on Zamora Street near Edsa, Kabayan Hotel's strategic address makes it attractive to local as well as foreign travelers. "Imagine that you are an OFW from the province and processing your papers here in Manila, this hotels offers you convenience since it is near offices and even the airport. If you have no relative or friend to go to and just looking for a place to spend the night, Kabayan Hotel can serve as an excellent base," suggests Napud.

Guests Senators Loren Legarda and Noli de Castro hailed the new hotel as a sign of renewed investor confidence on the country, thereby contributing to its economic recovery. Said Legarda: "I understand that this is primarily built to attract our OFWs. With its unique mix of hotel and dormitory facilities, you may likewise attract local and foreign tourists who wish to maximize value for their money."

On the other hand, De Castro underscored the noble idea behind the project. "Kabayan is an affordable hotel, which offers an impeccable service to its customers specifically the budget-conscious ones," said the senator who also commended the hotel's management for their initiative in providing such affordable and wholesome facilities in the hotel.

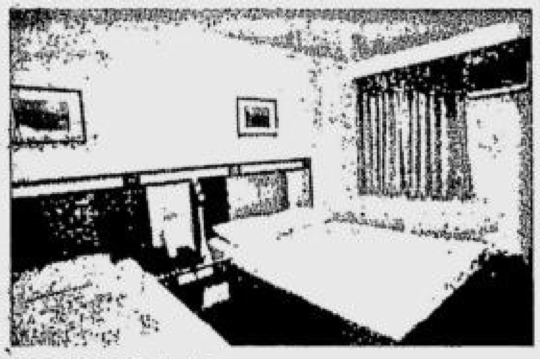
Boosting local economy

In enticing the OFWs, Napud aptly dubbed the hotel "Tahanan ng mga Bagong Bayani." "This hotel hopes to boost to the local economy as it targets the OFW market that contributed over $8 billion last year," reported Napud.

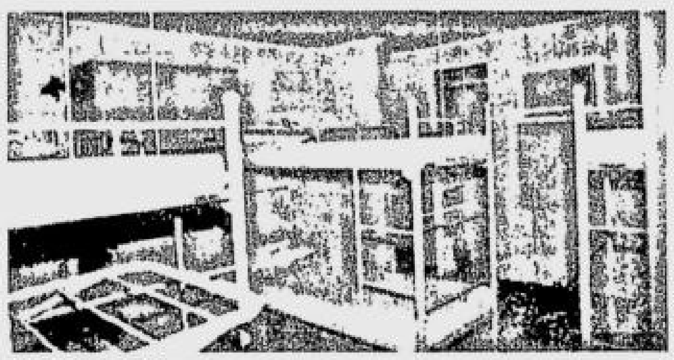
The P150-million investment is one of the projects of Armadillo Holding Corp., a diversified conglomerate with key interests in real estate, industrial laundry, construction of high-rise condominiums and wet markets as well as hotel-resort management.

Kabayan Hotel

THE SCALE model of Kabayan Hotel



KABAYAN'S hotel room



DORMITORY room

Luzon settlers get bulk of housing loans

URBAN poor housing beneficiaries in Luzon received the lion share of the P329.6 million in total loan assistance granted last year under the government's Community Mortgage Program to secure the land tenure and housing security of informal settlers.

CMP loans, averaging some P30,000 per family beneficiary, are granted to homeowners' associations of informal settlers for the purchase of land they occupy or to where they will be relocated and for housing construction/improvements, under the informal housing component of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's shelter program.

Lawyer Angelico T. Salud, president of National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. which administers CMP, reported that five Luzon regions received a total of P287.2 million in CMP loan release, compromising 87 percent of loans granted during the year.

The National Capital Region, with the biggest concentration of informal dwellers, garnered P148.79 million, consisting of 45 percent of the national total and 51.8 percent of the loan releases in Luzon, for a corresponding 40 CMP projects financed and 3,231 families assisted, according to Salud.

Cagayan Valley got P15.88 million for three projects and 611 beneficiaries; Central Luzon, P22.14 million, two projects, and 708 beneficiaries; Southern Luzon, P72.45-million, 16 projects, 2,343 beneficiaries; and Bicol region with P27.75million for three projects and 910 families granted loans.

Informal settlers in Mindanao, with five CMP projects financed, received a total of P30.6 million in loans, comprising 9.28 percent of the national total, for 1,144 beneficiaries; and Region 11 getting P12.92 million; Caraga region, P9.26 million; and Region 9, P8.4 million.

Two Visayan regions posted a total of P12.23 million in loans received; comprising a measly 3.7 percent of the national total, which financed for CMP projects with 501 family beneficiaries. These are broken down to P9.57 million loans for Region 6; and P2.65 million for Region 7.

Construction of Boracay resort in full swing

BORACAY Island's world-famed tropical landscape will soon welcome the addition of another vacation spot as the last stages of construction of The Sun Village Beachfront Resort goes well under way.

Situated in Angol near Station 3 in the south of the main Long Beach, The Sun Village Beachfront Resort will have 24 well-appointed air-conditioned rooms, each with a private toilet and bath. Hot and cold water will likewise be available in each room.

Serving as the centerpiece of the resort, the SunCafé open-air restaurant will serve succulent Filipino dishes, especially prepared by an in-house cook, while the spectacular Boracay sunset can be best viewed at the adjacent SunBar.

The resort will also be equipped with Cable TV for added entertainment and the SunShop will be stocked with precious arts and crafts for souvenirs.

Just like its sister-resort, The Sun Village Hilltop, The Sun Village Beachfront Resort makes extensive use of native materials for a more relaxed and laid-back atmosphere.

The Sun Village Beachfront Resort is scheduled to formally open in time for the coming summer season and reservations for February 2002 are now being accepted. Inquiries may also be coursed through fax 812-4797 or e-mail at fpni@pacific.net.ph or fuentes@pacific.net.ph.

The cooperative housing concept

BY JAIME L. YANEZA
Contributor

TODAY'S housing problem consists of securing for everyone, above all, the working class, laborers and employees, housing facilities that will promote health, safety, morals and general welfare at a price these intended beneficiaries can afford to pay. The solution to this problem is mandated by the 1987 Constitution, particularly by its following provision, to wit:

Section 9, Article XII—"The State shall, by law, and for the common good, undertake, in cooperation with the private sector, a continuing program of urban land reform and housing which will make available at affordable cost decent housing and basic services to underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban centers and resettlement areas..."

Bringing down cost

In fact, to bring down the cost of homeownership within the reach of the low-income families, the government has been continuously urged to redirect its public housing policies. And, to realize the same, the government has undertaken, among other measures, squatter relocation, BLISS and other like projects through the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, and home financing facilities are now available, like the Community Mortgage Housing Loan Package under the National Housing Authority, the so- called Unified Home Lending Program, a joint project of the Government Service Insurance System, the Social Security System and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig), and the Group Land Acquisition and Development Program of the HDMF/Pag-Ibig Fund.

Also, during the recently held National Socioeconomic Summit, the convenors and participants resolved "in principle" to launch the so-called "rent to own" housing program. Its mechanics, however, is yet to be hammered out and formulated by legislation before it could be finally implemented.

As its has been observed, many housing programs have already evolved under the said declared policies of the State. But the housing problem of today is of such magnitude that the government alone cannot be expected to provide the necessary solution; thus, there is a compelling necessity for the private sector and the government to work together, in close partnership, toward its early solution, or so as to conceive a more practical housing scheme.

Cooperative housing

And, this should lead us to seriously consider the "cooperative housing" concept. This concept, which is in conformity with the people empowerment mandated by the Constitution, will no doubt partly, if not totally, eliminate "profit system," give importance to the virtue of "self-help" and cooperation; and will definitely in a way solve the ticklish problem of providing decent housing at an affordable cost.

The said concept partakes the nature of social housing where a cooperative organization is to be formed by and through the voluntary association of the so-called low- and middle-income groups, or the underprivileged and homeless citizens. By mutual action and cooperation, the said aggrupation controls and operates, democratically, the duly formed cooperative entity to solve their housing problem, and forthwith share in the economic benefits based on their respective participation.

For and in the purpose of the preparation of the project's feasibility studies which incorporates the mechanics for its viability, the members could pool their talents, skills and specialties, or commission the services of a reputable real estate consultant (or adviser); the acquisition of the land for the proposed cooperative housing project may effected by the capital fund or resources pooled from the members; while its development, or that of providing the necessary amenities and facilities; including housing units itself, could be undertaken by and through their collective material, mental and moral strength—with mortgage financing subsidy or assistance from the aforesaid government entities, just as in the case of Community Mortgage Program and Group Land Acquisition and Development Program.

Under this proposed concept, all the units in the said housing project are to be owned by the duly formed "cooperative corporation" (or association). The project may consist of detached dwelling units in a residential subdivision project, or of individual housing units provided with land space in a low-rise condominium apartment (or townhouse) building. The said corporation shall issue only one class of stock, and shares of this stock are to be allocated to each housing unit—in proportion to their respective development and/or construction costs.

Proprietary lease

The said housing units are to be awarded to the stockholders (or members) of the cooperative corporation on a long-term lease. Under the so-called "proprietary lease," the tenant-stockholder agrees to pay as rental or maintenance charges his share of the corporation's net annual expenses, which includes taxes, mortgage financing interests, amortization payments, and other carrying charges. Here, the tenant-stockholder's allocated share in the expenses is the percentage that his stockholdings bear to the total number of outstanding shares of stock and allocated to other housing units in the project. Strictly speaking, however, the tenant-stockholder does not own the cooperative housing unit allocated to him; he is merely a stockholder, and it entitles him to the use and enjoyment of the housing under a proprietary lease with the cooperative corporation.

A close scrutiny of the cooperative system would lead us to conclude that it is really one of the simplest and most practical ways of solving our housing problem. Its history of more than hundred years of success and stability in Western and European countries, and even in communist countries like China, is a concrete evidence that it is no longer a trial-and-error solution to a particular problem.

Perhaps what is now proper and fitting for the government, particularly the legislators, is to enact a law on cooperative housing, inclusive of its further benefits and privileges, or incentives, such as partial real estate tax exemptions (or abatement), land subsidy by allocating certain public or patrimonial properties for the purpose, liberal rate of interests on mortgage financing of said projects, etc., to all the more encourage its use and application to our housing problem, and instill the Filipino's virtue of mutual help and cooperation or *bayanihan*.

BUSINESSMEN'S ACQUAINTANCE GAB

Ford president Terry Emrick, right, together with Snap-On Asia-Pacific managing director Jay Schultz, center, and PowerAsia Inc. chair and CEO Jose Antonio Banson engage in a familiar conversation during cocktails at the Manila Polo Club. The occasion was the formal acceptance of PowerAsia's master distributorship of the new product, Snap-On, the most used brand of tools and service equipment by professionals worldwide. PowerAsia became the exclusive distributor of Snap-On tools in the Philippines as of Jan. 1 this year.

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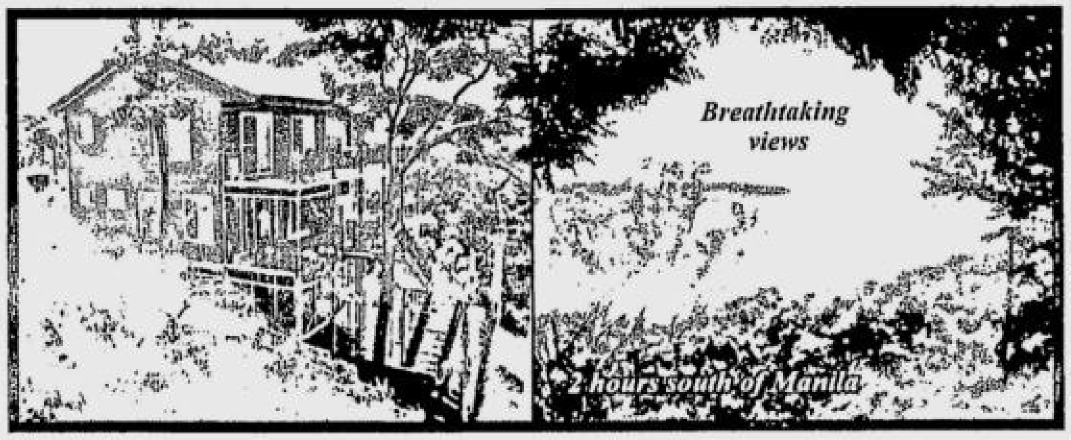

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CebuPac seen to junk Seoul flight plan

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

GOKONGWEI-OWNED Cebu Pacific Air may be forced to shelve its plan to fly to Seoul starting March if it would have to split with rival carrier Philippine Airlines Inc. the four additional flight allotments given by South Korea to the Philippines, a company official said.

Cebu Pacific vice president for corporate planning and external affairs Peggy Vera said in a telephone interview yesterday that "it would be business suicide" for Cebu Pacific to service the lucrative Seoul-Korea route only twice weekly.

"We really are hesitant to split the allotments with PAL. The Korean carriers have 17 (flights per week), PAL will have 15 while Cebu Pacific will only have two. I will recommend to management that we just do not push through with our flights to Korea. We will not be able to compete," she told the INQUIRER.

In an earlier interview, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said PAL and Cebu Pacific should resolve their dispute between themselves before the Civil Aeronautics Board steps into the picture.

"Maybe they could arrive at a compromise and just split the four additional entitlements," he said.

The CAB on Dec. 19 granted Cebu Pacific three of the four additional Korea entitlements that the country acquired through an amended air service agreement signed in Seoul on Nov. 29.

The other frequency entitlement, which the country will formally get in April, will be given to PAL, controlled by taipan Lucio Tan.

PAL, however, submitted a motion for reconsideration opposing the CAB's decision.

"As the pioneer operator on the route, the 'grandfather rights' principle accorded it priority in recognition of the substantial investment the airline had sunk into the development of the service," PAL said in a statement last week.

However, Vera said PAL could not keep on invoking the "grandfather rights" principle.

"PAL has been there for 60 years. If it will keep on invoking the grandfather rule, no other carrier will be able to get in. The grandfather rights principle is a good general rule except that the government has adopted a liberalization policy," she said.

Executive Order No. 219, or the progressive civil aviation liberalization policy, called for the designation of two or more international carriers to encourage competition in the industry.

However, in a statement issued Monday, PAL said the Cebu Pacific had failed thrice to deliver on its promise to service the lucrative Manila-Seoul route, "wasting economic opportunities" for the country.

"Cebu Pacific's failure to use the Philippine flight entitlements to Korea denies the nation economic opportunities those flights would have opened. In contrast, PAL's full utilization of its entitlements will benefit the country by generating more Korean visitor inflows," it said.

PAL said Cebu Pacific had said it would start flying to Korea in October last year, but the schedule was postponed.

Gov't considers new swap deal

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

WITH $600 million more in foreign funds to raise this year, the government is considering a repeat in the first half of the year of its $200-million swap arrangement first done in July last year.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said in an interview yesterday that the government was planning to again tap the three- and five-year dollar swap markets to complete its $1.5-billion external financing requirement this year.

He said the government was also poised to issue some P10 billion worth of four-year retail treasury bills in the second quarter.

The Macapagal administration must raise about P113 billion from local and foreign money markets this year.

The retail treasuries will be open to investors with a minimum placement of P5,000.

The government issued about P30 billion worth of four-year retail T-bills last year.

"We are again exploring the swap arrangement that we did last year with HSBC. But if we have to do it again, we have to open it to other interested parties," Edeza said.

He said the amount to be raised from the swap arrangement would be about $200 million and the issuance, should it push through, would be set in the first six months of the year.

"We were able to save a lot when we did the swaps the first time, so we are considering it again. It's a new product, but we couldn't issue huge amounts from that," he said.

The $220-million swap arrangement handled by HSBC Corp. in July last year was cited as one of the most innovative deals in Asia.

HSBC raised $220 million for the government and swapped the dollars into pesos worth P11.81 billion with 19 foreign and local lenders.

The swap was the first-of-its-kind arrangement and the first time for the Philippine government to offer the product.

Edeza said the fixed-rate borrowing arranged by HSBC last year was obtained at a favorable spread of 1.7 percentage points for the three-year instruments and 1.9 percentage points for the five-year instruments over the six-month London Interbank Offered Rate.

The prevailing rate for the three- and five-year borrowings in the market that time offered spreads of 3.25 percentage points and 4.25 percentage points over Libor.

Edeza said the national government was able to save $18.8 million in interest payments because of the favorable pricing.

"If we had borrowed dollars from the foreign market, the investors would have factored in sovereign as well as emerging markets risks," he said.

Of the $1.5 billion in foreign funds it needs this year, the government has already raised $1 billion from the Japanese bond market, the local dollar-deposit units of banks, and the global bond market.

The government sold $750 million in global bonds two weeks ago at a pricing considered cheap for the sovereign. The government would use $500 million to finance its budget deficit and re-lend $250 million to the National Power Corp.

BATANGAS PORT EXPANSION
President Macapagal-Arroyo led the groundbreaking ceremonies of the construction of the second phase of the Batangas International Seaport worth P5-5-billion in Batangas City. With the President during the ceremonies were (from left) former Batangas and Board of Investments governor Tony Leviste, Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas, PPA General Manager Alfonso Cusi, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and Shimizu vice president Fumio Miyake, representing the project contractor, the Shimizu-FF Cruz joint venture.

PSE prexy backs unified fixed income board

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange president Ernest Leung said he was not giving up hopes that the bourse and the influential Bankers Association of the Philippines could unify their respective fixed income boards.

In an interview, Leung said he would continue talking to bankers to convince them that it would be better to have just one system to facilitate the trading of fixed income instruments rather than maintain two separate systems.

Leung, a former finance secretary and president of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., explained that having only one fixed income trading exchange would help the country resources through lower operating costs. He said that having separate systems for the same purpose would just be a waste of scarce resources.

"They are saying that the BAP system is already in an advanced level. For me, it doesn't matter who did it first. What matters is how we can arrive at a mutually beneficial arrangement," Leung said. "We're keeping the dialogue open."

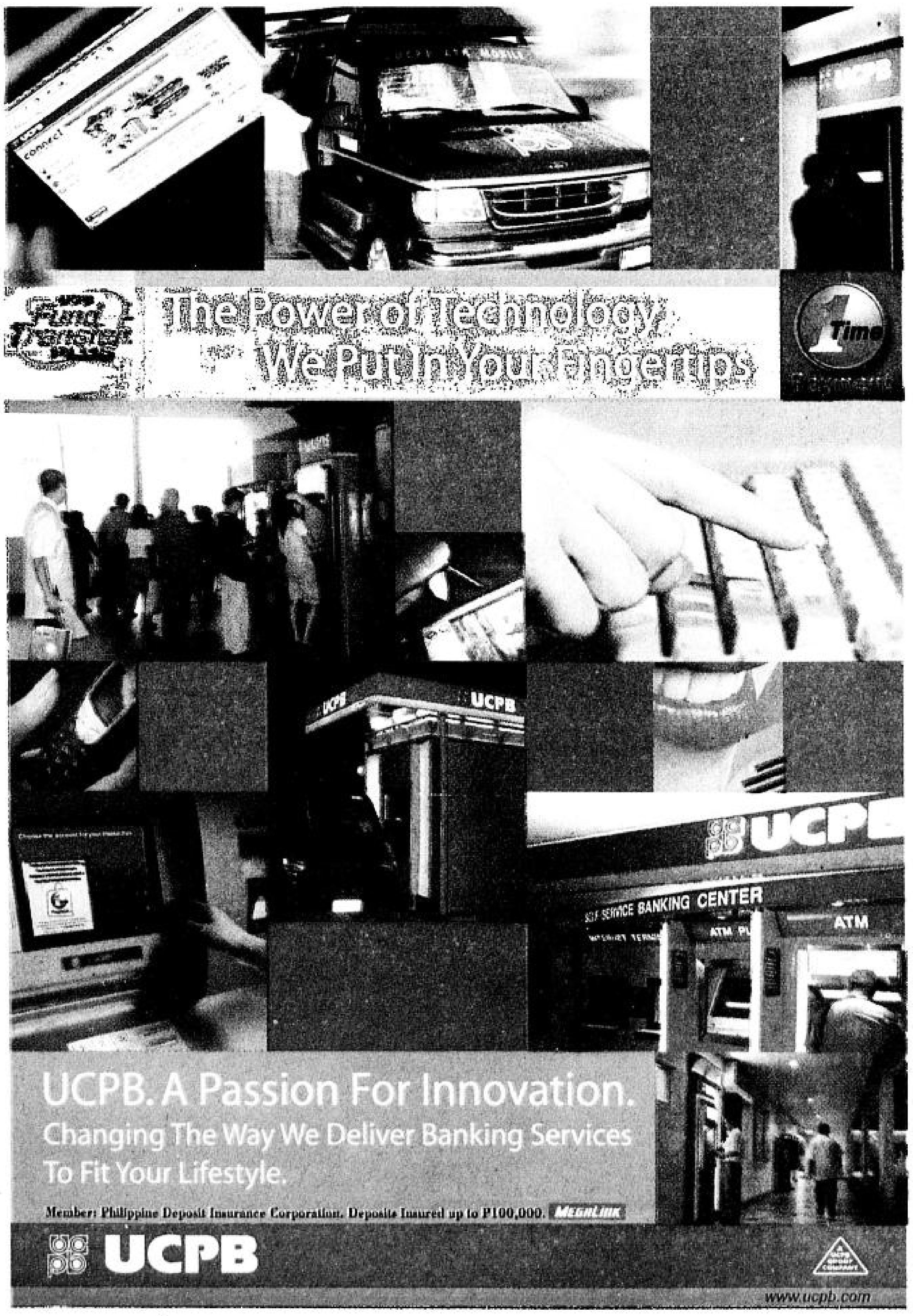
Leung said he preferred that the PSE and BAP would consolidate their efforts so as to generate more liquidity for the secondary trading of fixed income instruments. He said the PSE could make some adjustments in its own trading system.

He said there were several options for the unification of the fixed income boards of the PSE and BAP, including the creation of a joint venture subsidiary that will handle the unified trading.

The PSE launched its fixed income board early last year with the listing of the national government's small-denominated Treasury (SDT) bonds worth P8 billion. It was aimed at giving investors an alternative investment option while stocks trading remained sluggish.

Investor interest on the new board, however, has yet to pick up. Only a few brokers were earlier allowed to execute orders for the new board. In line with plans to list more debt instruments, however, the PSE is working on having more brokerage houses authorized to participate.

The BAP, for its part, put up its own fixed income board to expand the secondary market for fixed income instruments.



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National Steel union files complaint vs Roxas

THE WORKERS' union of National Steel Corp. (NSC) filed with the Ombudsman yesterday a formal complaint against Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act No. 3019), the code of conduct for public officers (RA 6713) and certain provisions of the 1987 Constitution.

Roxas is being sued in his capacity as chair of the evaluation committee for the rehabilitation of the steel company.

National Steel Labor Union-FFW (Naslu-FFW) president Simplicio H. Villarta Jr. in his complaint-affidavit claimed that Roxas' intervention in seeking a solution to the deadlock in the NSC problem, was primarily geared toward the promotion of his personal interests, which is anti-poor, anti-Filipino and pro-foreign capitalists.

Villarta, in the same complaint, accused Roxas of "causing undue injury to the complainants while giving undue advantage to his favored bidders through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence in the exercise of his official functions."

"Under the guise of brokering a mutually acceptable solution to the NSC deadlock, and with the semblance of fair play," the complaint said, "Roxas orchestrated a bidding scheme for the interim lease of the NSC plant."

"But when Allengoal Steel offered the most advantageous terms, he stalled the award and created the EC (evaluation committee) that would receive additional bids," it added.

The NSC plant was shut down in November 1999 due to mounting debts reaching P16 billion. An interim lease agreement was forged between Allengoal Steel and NSC through its executive director and chair Ibrahim Bidin on May 26, 2000 to rehabilitate the plant and preserve the assets. The lease package covered a P17.85-million monthly rental or 40 percent of the net profits, whichever was higher, plus P100 million in performance warranties and surety on the equipment. At that time, the creditors and the majority owners could not come to terms on the lease and Roxas stepped in, leading to the first bidding.

In the second bidding held on Sept. 21, 2001, only two offers were made. Allengoal withdrew from the auction as it sought clarification on the terms of the bidding and called for transparency in the process. On the committee's assurance that the process would be fair and that the unreasonable terms were going to be purged, Allengoal submitted its improved offer, which again turned out to be the best offer on the table.

Meanwhile, Naslu-FFW, in a bid to protect the interest of its members who remained out of work to date, sought an order from the Securities and Exchange Commission that would implement the May 2000 lease of the NSC plant to Allengoal. Separate motions to remove the SEC-appointed liquidator and the evaluation committee from the NSC lease proceedings were filed by the union with the SEC.

Claiming that there is "an unseen hand influencing the probable outcome of the bidding process," Villarta said there was a clear intent to "eliminate Allengoal as the probable temporary lessee of NSC's Iligan plant."

RFM declares ₱2B in dividends

FOOD and beverage conglomerate RFM Corp. yesterday declared P2 billion in cash dividends to shareholders as their share in the windfall from the sale of the group's controlling stake in Cosmos Bottling Corp. to San Miguel Corp.

RFM disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the cash dividends, equivalent to P1.28 per share, was approved by the company's board of directors for payment by Feb. 20 to stockholders of record as of Feb. 11.

"RFM will continue to be in a positive net cash position even after the cash dividends. Cash reserves will be kept at around P3 billion to remain in a position to take advantage of future growth opportunities," RFM president and CEO Jose Concepcion III said in a statement.

"We sought the approval of the cash dividend declaration as we are happy to share will all our shareholders part of the gains brought about by the Cosmos transaction," Concepcion said.

The financial closing of the sale of RFM's 82.3-percent stake in CBC to SMC was completed on Jan. 3. The deal valued Cosmos at P14 billion.

"RFM will continue to focus on its current lines of branded food and beverage products such as Sunkist juice drinks, Selecta Moo milk drinks, Selecta ice cream, White King cakes, Fiesta pasta, and Swift chicken and meat products," Concepcion said.

"RFM will grow organically these businesses and strengthen their market hold in their respective product categories," he said.

Portion of the proceeds from the sale, amounting to P1.05 billion, was used by RFM to buy back 21 percent of its own shares from New York-based fund manager WP Argosy Ltd., a foreign fund that invested as a minority shareholder in RFM in 1999. The foreign fund manager sold its stake in order to consolidate its resources in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C.

About 60 percent of RFM is controlled by the Concepcion group of companies while 18 percent is held by the public.

Based on RFM's latest unaudited financial statement, its book value stood at about P7.8 billion. With the recent buyback of shares, however, the book value was adjusted down to P6.77 billion or about P4.34 per share.

"Along the way, if there are good opportunities for merger or acquisition, we shall always be open to explore them. But there is no rush. We shall be prudent in our capital investments and expenditures," Concepcion said.

"At the moment, the priorities are set to continue strengthening our brands, revitalizing our sales and distribution network, trimming our costs, and working on further efficiency and systems improvement in operations," he said.

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CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

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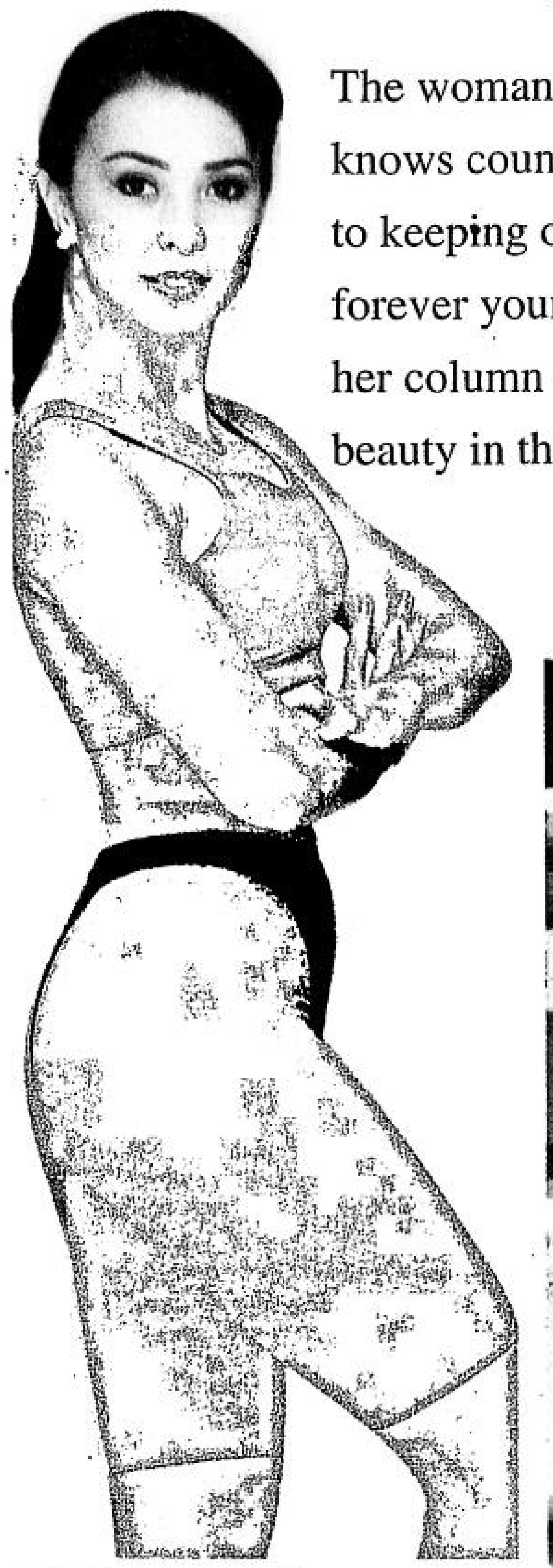


The woman who knows countless secrets to keeping oneself forever young begins her column on inner beauty in this issue

There's something about Cory

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

CORY Quirino does not feel bad when she's called a "vain" person. For her the word "vain" is not derogatory because it's a fact of life. "Vanity is good," she claims, "because it is rooted in self-love. If you don't love yourself, there's not enough love to give to others."

To love yourself, as far as Cory is concerned, "simply means feeding yourself with nourishing food to keep you fit, respecting your body as the temple of your soul, feeding your mind with material that will enlighten you and broaden your knowledge, and being with people who are positive."

Cory, the indefatigable TV host, health buff, civic leader and presidential granddaughter, has been an exponent of beauty, fitness and youthfulness. She is the image model for the international brand Imedeen, a tablet that improves the skin quality and structure of photo-damaged skin.

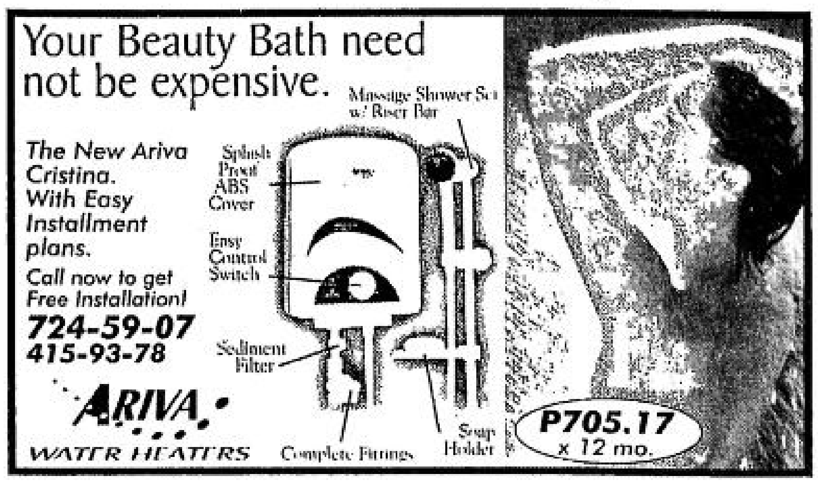
Unlike those people who focus only on being beautiful and physically fit, Cory adheres to the holistic approach of being radiant inside out, or what she calls the mind and body harmony. "The mind and body are one. I have come to the conclusion that they are inseparable. One cannot act without the other. What the mind believes, the body becomes. One can attempt to heal the body but if the soul is ailing, true healing will not be complete. One may spend hours in the gym, but if the heart is despairing, no fitness program can lead you to better health," she maintains.

Whatever Cory has now—positive disposition in life, flawless skin, youthful looks and a near-perfect body—she has achieved through proper diet, exercise, discipline and lots of meditation. Cory meditates for at least 15 minutes in the morning and another 15 minutes at night.

Dedication to fitness

Cory started getting conscious about her body and her health when, to her horror, she discovered one day that she couldn't fit into her favorite cocktail dress. "I couldn't zip it up!" This was in the mid-1980s. She disrobed and cross-examined every bulge and uneven contour, down to the minutest ripple. She was 15 pounds overweight! She had not even noticed until she took a long, hard look at her naked body.

THERE'S/p.C5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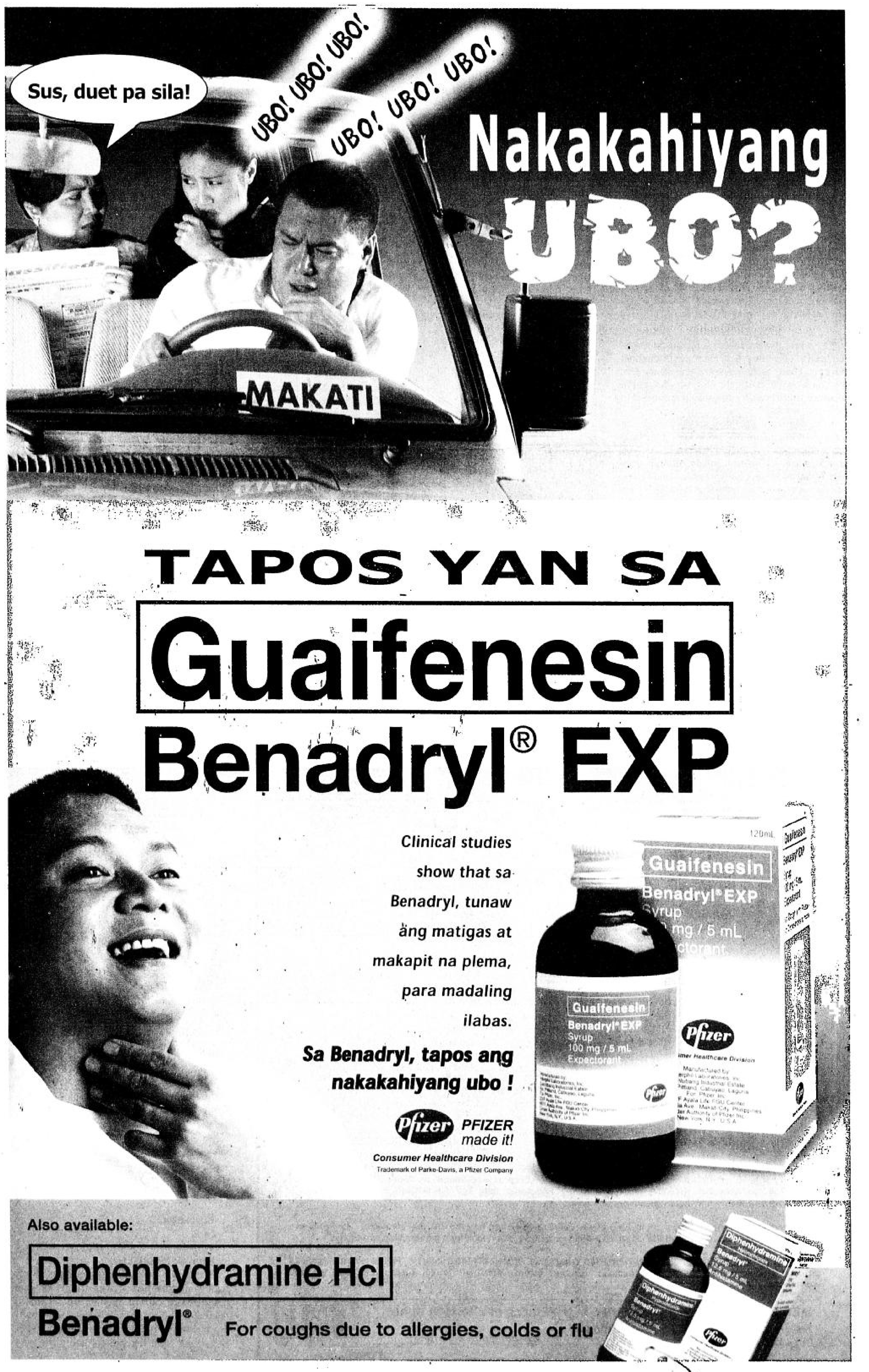
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Control stress before it controls you

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

WE cannot totally get rid of stress from our lives because it is our body's automatic response to any demand, real or imagined, put on it. Besides, stress is a necessary part of life to challenge us into action. It is uninterrupted or prolonged stress that is the killer. If you have enough time to recover and rest between one bout of stress and another and you can keep your stressors to a minimum, you can control the damage that stress can inflict on you. Otherwise, stress will control your life and you will eventually experience burnout, illness and broken relationships.

Three characteristics of stress

The first step in controlling stress or "stress management" is to understand what stress is all about. According to Barbara Brown, author of "Between Health and Illness," stress has three characteristics: It is unique to each person, it depends upon interaction with others and it starts in the mind.

Unique. Different people will interpret a stressful situation differently. Talking before a large crowd stresses Person A but stimulates Person B. On the other hand, A enjoys bungee jumping while B finds it terrifying.

Interactive. One of the reasons Christmas is stressful is the social pressure to give gifts. Many people don't want to do it but are pressured because of the "what will other people say?" syndrome. If you didn't care what other people would think of you, you wouldn't feel stressed.

Starts in the mind. It is your perception and expectation of a situation that determines what kind and how much stress you will undergo. If you have an attitude of viewing obstacles as opportunities or challenges, you will experience positive stress, which will help you grow as a person. If you view problems as threats or traps, then you will be negatively stressed.

Anticipating or worrying about problems that have not yet occurred is another example of stress originating in the mind. Richard Carlson, author of "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff," observes, "Most people anticipate life rather than live it." Another way to put it is through a saying that someone sent me: "Today is the Tomorrow you worried about Yesterday. Was it worth it?"

Get quick relief

To prevent stress from reaching critical levels, you need to take immediate measures throughout the day. These techniques are temporary but, done on a regular basis, they are very helpful in releasing stress before it has a chance to build to unhealthy levels.

- Deep breathing calms you down because it is the direct opposite of your body's breathing response (rapid and shallow) to stress. All you have to do is sit quietly, inhale through your nose as you allow your belly to inflate, and exhale through your nose or mouth as you feel your belly deflate. Try inhaling for five counts and exhaling for five counts. Focusing on the movement in your abdomen and the sound of your exhalation will make you even more relaxed.
- Studies have found that even brief exposures to nature can reduce stress. You may not be lucky enough to have a view of grass and trees from your office desk, but you can get the same benefit by looking at a picture of nature scenes. This can be in the form of a calendar, wall painting, computer screen saver, aquarium, nature TV channel, etc. Playing a CD or tape with the sound of waves, birds or whales is also relaxing. So even if you can't take the afternoon off for a round of golf (no wonder it is so popular among business executives), take regular nature breaks throughout the day right at your desk.

Manage your time

It is ironic that with all the supposed time-saving devices available like the cell phone, fax, e-mail and digital organizer, modern man is feeling even more time-crunched. Ofer Zur, a time-management therapist, had this to say about "techno stress"—"We've become obsessed with speed. We end up with lots of plans that we can't execute, and full schedules that can't be followed. The paradox of our timesaving tech gadgets is that we've wound up with no free time."

ILLUSTRATION BY JED ESTRADA

Managing your time does not mean, as I used to believe, finding ways to do more things in less time. That just leads, as I discovered, to more stress. It means deciding what are the most important things to you and using your time wisely to do only those things.

- Delegate whatever you can.
- Strive for excellence but don't be a perfectionist.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Don't fill your day with too many activities.
- Learn to say no. You can't be everything to everyone.
- Locate the sources of your daily stress. Take action to avoid them in the future.
- Realize that you are not Superman or Superwoman. It is just not humanly possible to accomplish everything in one day.
- Set aside 30 minutes or an hour every day for leisure time. This is not a luxury. This is a necessity. You can exercise, get a massage, read a book, watch TV, do cross-stitch—whatever interests you and is not related in any way to your work.

Reach out to someone

Keeping your feelings to yourself is an excellent way to develop chronic stress and get sick. Talk to someone close on a regular basis about issues in your life that are bothering you. Even if they can't help you, just talking about your problems makes you feel better. Getting daily hugs from your loved ones is also vital to your mental and emotional health. Studies have shown that even just stroking a pet can lower blood pressure. And, lastly, don't forget the power of prayer. There are many things in this life that we cannot control. Relinquishing those things to God's able and faithful hands is a great stress-buster.

> Stress is unique to each person; it depends upon interaction with others and it starts in the mind

Exercise

Exercise is one of the most important tools in managing stress because the body's fight-or-flight stress response has prepared it for physical activity. Exercise releases all that pent-up energy. It dissipates the chemical by-products of the stress hormones, normalizes your blood pressure, "cleans" out your blood vessels, strengthens the heart, releases tension from your muscles and burns excess fat and glucose in your bloodstream. In short, it does all the opposite things that stress does to your body.

Research shows that exercise reduces tension, anxiety, depression and anger, though scientists still don't quite know why. Both aerobic (walking, running, cycling, etc) and resistance (weight lifting) exercises are beneficial. Mind-body type of exercises like yoga, tai chi and Pilates that incorporate principles of coordinated breathing, mindfulness and focus have additional benefits in controlling stress.

There is one caveat about exercise and stress. Competitive sports can create more stress if you are the type of person who does not know how to lose.

Eat right and get enough rest

Even if you are managing your time correctly, you have close friends to share your feelings and you are exercising regularly, your efforts at stress management will be undermined if you are not eating properly or getting enough rest. You cannot separate the mind from the body. When the body is tired from sleep deprivation or from not getting enough nutrients, your mind and attitude will be negatively affected.

COPE strategy

Jeff Anthony of the San Diego Sports Medicine Center defines stress management in a nutshell with the COPE strategy: Control what you can, be open about issues, pace yourself and don't overbook, and exercise.

For questions and past articles or exercises, visit www.tinajuanfitness.com

Take Charge Doc!
Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA every Tuesday.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Does my plan cover imaging procedures such as CT Scan and MRI?
Yes, CT Scan (computerized tomography) and MRI are covered procedures for covered illnesses. For standard healthcare programs, these diagnostic exams may be availed up to P 5,000 subject to the pre-existing conditions coverage. For large group and corporate accounts, the benefit is subject to negotiated limits. The limit specified for the exam is however inclusive of the cost of room and board, if done on an in-patient basis, doctor's professional fees and other incidental charges.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Meet the Medical Director of Perpetual Help Hospital in Manila and MEDICard accredited specialist. **Dr. Ma. Theresa T. Salazar.** *Doktora Tes*, as frequently called by her patients, is a Medicine graduate from UST. She specializes in OB-Gynecology, subspecializing in he treatment of infertility, where she received her training from the Southern California Fertility Institute. Doc Theresa is a member of the American Reproductive Health Society and a Fellow to the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society. You may visit her for your consultation needs every Mondays and Thursdays from 8 AM to 5 PM.

Internist **Dr. Josefino A. Ramos** has been practicing his profession for more than 23 years now. His experience and training in his field has made him one of the most valued doctors of MEDICard. Doc Josefino graduated Doctor of Medicine from Far Eastern University. He took his specialization and his subspecialization training on kidney diseases from UP-PGH. He is currently a valued member of the International Society of Nephrology and the American Society of Nephrology. For your consultation needs, visit Dr. Ramos at room 710 of Davao Doctors Hospital, from 1 PM to 6 in the evening.

After graduating from Medicine, **Dr. Elmer C. Valenzona** pursued further studies and specialized in Pediatrics. Now based in Perpetual Help Medical Center in Biñan, Laguna, Doc Elmer has been addressing the health needs of MEDICard members for sometime now. He is married to Rhodora Valenzona, an Internist and has been blessed with one child. Dr. Valenzona is a member to the Philippine Pediatric Society and the Philippine Medical Society. He is also an officer to the Biñan Medical Society. For your medical needs, visit him at room 116, from Mondays to Fridays, 10 AM to 1 PM.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com.

For individual or family membership inquiries, please call 818-2161 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, please call 817-5136, 817-4985 or 817-5127 and look for a membership consultant.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com

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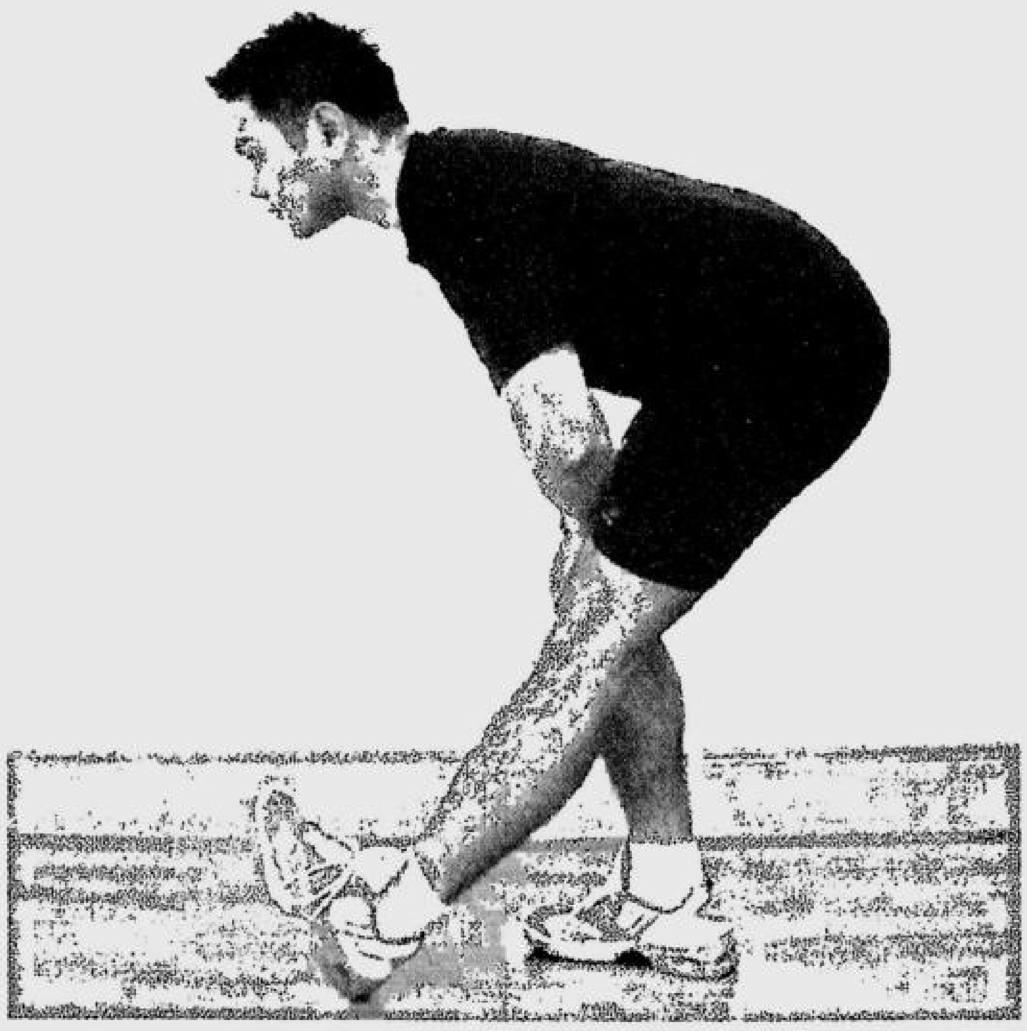
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Standing hamstring stretch

Stretches the back of the thighs (hamstrings), which are usually tight in a lot of people. Tight hamstrings can contribute to lower back pain by pulling the pelvis and spine into a kyphotic or "flat back" posture. Tight hamstrings are also more prone to getting strained or pulled during sports or everyday activities.

Equipment:
None

Exercise technique:

Stand with your right leg in front of you with your foot flexed. The weight of your body will be carried by your left leg that is behind you. Bend your left knee and slowly lower your body into a semi-squat position. Keep your right leg straight and place your hands (to support your back) on the thigh of your left leg.

Keep your back straight by keeping your abdominal muscles tight and your chest opened. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Continue to breathe normally. Switch to the other leg.

Performance tips:

To increase this stretch, pretend that your buttocks are against a wall, slide your buttocks up the wall slightly.

Avoid placing your hands on the knee of the straight leg because you might push the knee backward, causing pain and injury.

Keep your spine straight instead of rounded. Keep your chest open instead of concave.

Sit back on your buttocks instead of bending forward from the waist.

WEEKLY DOSAGE

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Amargozin
AMPALAYA CAPSULE
FOOD SUPPLEMENT

A HIGHLY nutritious vegetable, *ampalaya* is rich in vitamins A, B and C as well as iron, calcium and phosphorus. The Department of Health is promoting it as one of the 10 medicinal plants for public consumption. Now, there's Amargazin Ampalaya capsules that give the common benefits of the plant leaves and fruits. One to three capsules can be taken three times daily, with the dose adjusted depending on blood sugar levels. Available at all Mercury Drugstore branches nationwide. Call Altermed at 411-9907 or 920-1911.

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BOSS
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BOYS and bosses will be able to face the world with greater confidence with Boss by Babes Facial Cleanser for Men. Formulated by Ro-gemson Co., it keeps the face clean, hydrat-ed and protected against harmful UV rays. Enhanced with a special masculine scent, it makes a man feel fresh and clean and smell good. It comes in 75-ml, 150-ml and 250-ml sizes with clear and blue variants. Available at Mercury Drug branches and other leading supermarkets nationwide.

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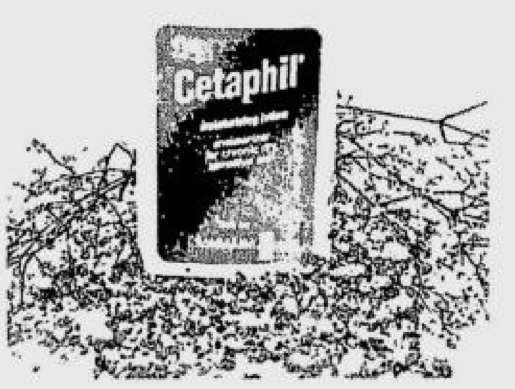
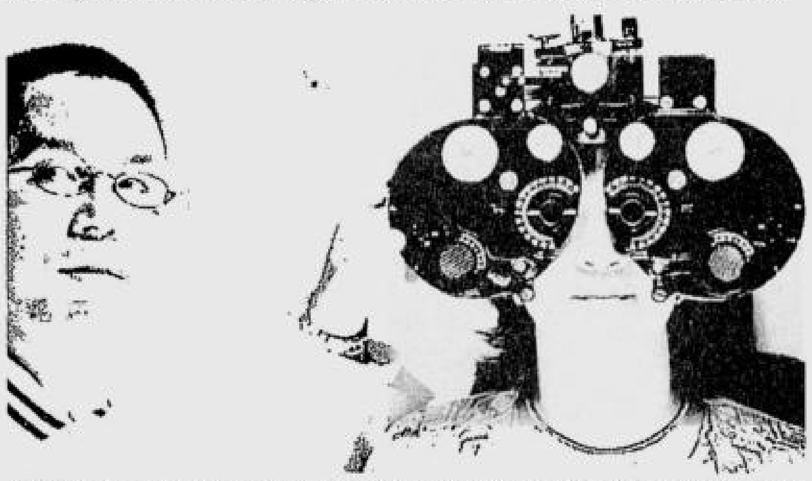
CHARANTIA Ampalaya Health Drink is now available in tea bags. It's made from fruits and seeds of the *ampalaya* that are dried by a special dehydration process, which "locks in" its antidiabetic properties while removing its bitter taste. Made by Herbcare Enterprise, Charantia is clinically proven safe and effective in the control of diabetes. Available nationwide in all leading drugstores, health shops and supermarkets. Call 802-2222.



GALDERMA Philippines, maker of Cetaphil skin cleansers, has come out with Cetaphil Moisturizing Lotion, its newest solution for chronic dry and sensitive skin. Galderma's Cetaphil Moisturizing Lotion is specifically formulated to moisturize even the most sensitive skin. It is noncomedogenic and is free of irritants such as lanolin and fragrances.

AVON introduces Avon Heaven Scent Sunshine Yellow Splash Cologne. All family members will love this fruity fresh and deliciously delightful fragrance. Available this month at Avon Boutiques in SM Megamall, SM Southmall, Glorietta and Ali Mall. As a special introductory offer this January, Avon Heaven Scent Splash Colognes are available for only P79, a 60-percent discount off the regular price. Other Heaven Scent variants are Agua De Colonia, Angel Blue and Pink Petals. Call 864-2900.



EYE refraction, a test to determine if a patient has myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism or presbyopia, is one of the services offered by Healthway Medical Clinics. Healthway was recently recommended for International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001: 2000 by SGS Philippines.

Ways to develop healthy habits

Healthy Options
DIABETES:
10 Healthy Habits for the New Year

STILL feeling sluggish with back-to-work blues? The January/February issue of Healthy Options News Digest encourages you to get back on your feet fast with easy-to-follow steps to a healthier, perkier existence for you and the whole family. Start with the inspiring cover story billed "10 Healthy Habits for the New Year."

Ever conscious of your weight? Read the special review of popular diets, some of which you may have never even heard of, in "Weight Watch." Find out how you fare in terms of eating habits and calorie intake in "Health Quiz." The news digest's "Health Buzz" offers good news to beer drinkers and suggests gentle flu-fighting strategies for the season. Discover the signs and symptoms as well as preventive care for a common ailment, urinary tract infection in "Women's Health." Learn the 10 ways to de-stress a child in "Kids' Health." The "Supplement Review" lists nine easy steps in choosing the right multivitamins that will work for you. Avoid diabetes complications. "Health Notes" gives proper foot care and footwear. Also, check out the secrets to the happy and healthy existence of 51-year-old actress Sigourney Weaver in "Looking Glass." And in "Vital Finds," find out why cat lovers live longer.

Healthy Options News Digest is available at Healthy Options stores located at: 1/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; 2/L Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; G/L Ayala Center, Cebu City; LG/F SM City, North Edsa; 2/L SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; and 2/L SM Megamall B, Mandaluyong City.

Fighting wrinkles and weight gain . . .

(From page C6)

cause. That's why cosmetic acupuncture is coupled with body acupuncture to correct the underlying mechanism causing the wrinkles. Doing it on the face alone is not as effective unless done with body acupuncture. We put needles below the ankles for the liver stomach and spleen."

In traditional Chinese medicine, the diagnosis is made as to how the vital organs function.

"The spleen supports nutrition. The heart is for emotion. The liver is for emotion and the muscles. The stomach is for the production of energy from food. The spleen is for comfort," says Dr. Falconi.

He can make a diagnosis by looking at the face. "It is best to come without any makeup to assess the status of the patient," he adds. For instance, for hyperpigmentation or dark spots, the liver is the vital organ concerned.

"If you look 15 years older, it's the spleen and stomach."

The benefits are more than cosmetic. "The face alone can cure ailments in the body. Points near the mouth corners can treat back pain; the nasolabial fold, sinusitis. The forehead treats migraine," he says.

Savings

Dr. Falconi discourages patients who have undergone major face-lifts from coming for acupuncture. "The cheeks are stretched that when you put the needle, it's painful and bleeding occurs. If the patient is insistent, we give it a try. More often, they are the ones who surrender."

Studies have proven that acupuncture is recommended for pre- and post-surgery as it boosts the patient's immunity and energy. However, many doctors are still skeptical of this healing art.

"Some doctors don't give credit to acupuncturists," says Dr. Falconi. "That's the problem. They discourage patients by saying it has no value or that you might get an infection."

Asked if one should undergo acupuncture before a mini-tuck or an eyebag removal to speed the healing, he advises, "Try acupuncture first before any surgery. It's a lot cheaper. If you pay a top cosmetic surgeon, say, P150,000, you can use that amount for acupuncture treatments in the next few years. If your problem is not solved, go ahead. Tell your surgeon."

Bible proves we can talk to the dead

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

WE have often heard many Christian preachers say that we cannot talk to the dead, that when a person dies he can never come back to show himself to the living and if anybody shows up, it is the devil masquerading as the deceased.

They cite a passage in the Bible that says in effect that "man only lives once and after death comes judgment." He cannot therefore appear to living again. Maybe that statement is true in general, but there are exceptions.

And one such exception is clearly and unmistakably spelled out in Chapter 28 of Samuel I in the Bible. The whole chapter tells the story of how King Saul consulted a woman medium or spiritist in Endor, who summoned the spirit of the prophet Samuel and talked to him.

Let me quote in full the relevant passage, since this is always ignored by all preachers because it will disprove their contention that "the dead never comes back" and that "it is impossible to talk to the dead." They usually quote only the passages in the Bible that will favor their preconceived conclusions. It is important to stress that this particular passage does exist and can readily be found in the Bible.

Saul consults a medium

"Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa.

"When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

"Then Saul said to his servants, 'Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.' His servants said to him, 'There is a medium at Endor.'

"So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went there, he and two men with him. They came to the woman by night.

"And he said, 'Consult a spirit for me, and bring up for me the one whom I name to you.'

"The woman said to him, 'Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?'

"But Saul swore to her by the Lord. 'As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.'

"Then the woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?'

"He answered, 'Bring up Samuel for me.'

"When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman said to Saul, 'Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!'

"The king said to her, 'Have no fear; what do you see?'

"The woman said to Saul, 'I see a divine being coming up out of the ground.'

"He said to her, 'What is his appearance?'

"She said, 'An old man is coming up; he is wrapped in a robe.'

"So Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

"Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?'

"Saul answered, 'I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; so I have summoned you to tell me what I should do.'

"Samuel said, 'Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done to you just as He spoke by me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you today. Moreover, the Lord will give Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the Lord will give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.'

"Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel, and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night."

It is very clear from the above passage that King Saul succeeded in talking to the spirit of the prophet Samuel through the medium of Endor. He even asked her to describe how he appeared and upon hearing the answer, Saul was convinced it was indeed Samuel. He "bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance." The Bible didn't say it was the devil who appeared to Saul in the guise of Samuel, as modern preachers believe.

Why then do they still deny the fact that we can talk to the spirit of the dead? Because there are passages in the Bible that say the dead do not come back anymore. And I say that is generally correct, but it is not absolute.

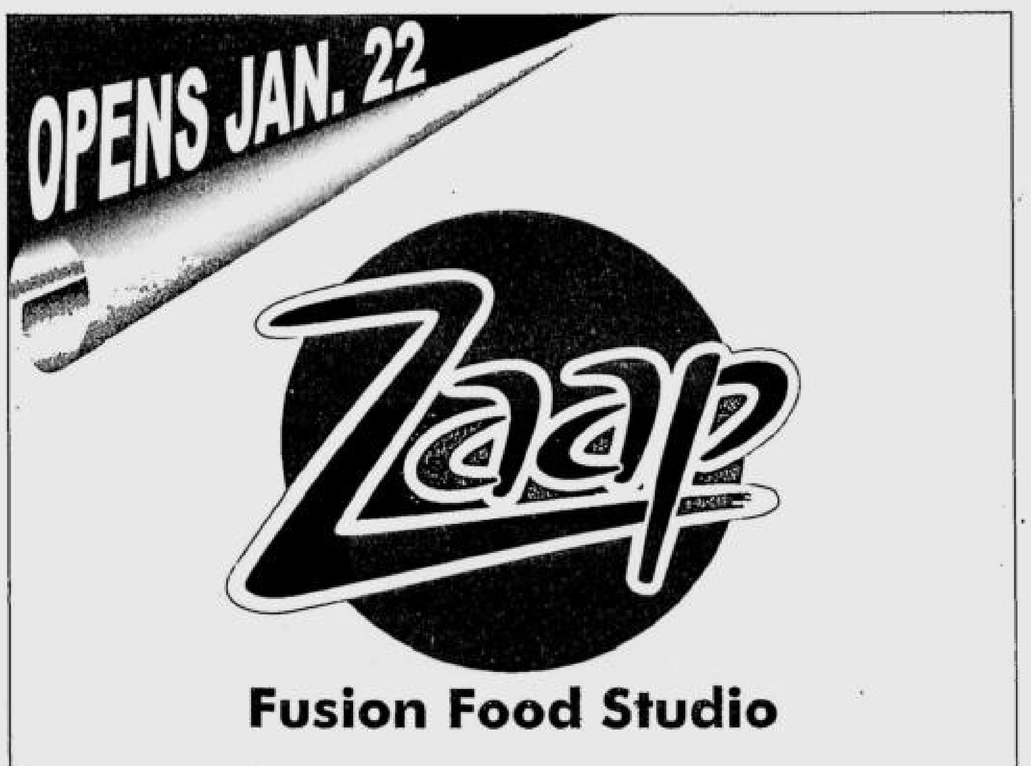
What about Deut. 18:9-14, which prohibits divination, sorcery and consulting the dead? Doesn't this prove that it is wrong to do these things?

My answer is very simple and logical. It is true there is such a prohibition and again I say I completely agree with this. In general, we should not do these things. But it is one thing to say that an act is prohibited and another thing to say it does not exist or cannot happen.

The fact that communicating with the spirits of the dead is prohibited by God only proves it is possible to do that. Otherwise the prohibition does not make sense. One does not have to prohibit something that cannot be done or is impossible to do.

Therefore my conclusion remains inviolate and the Bible proves it; namely, that man can and does communicate with the spirits of the dead.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit my website at www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.



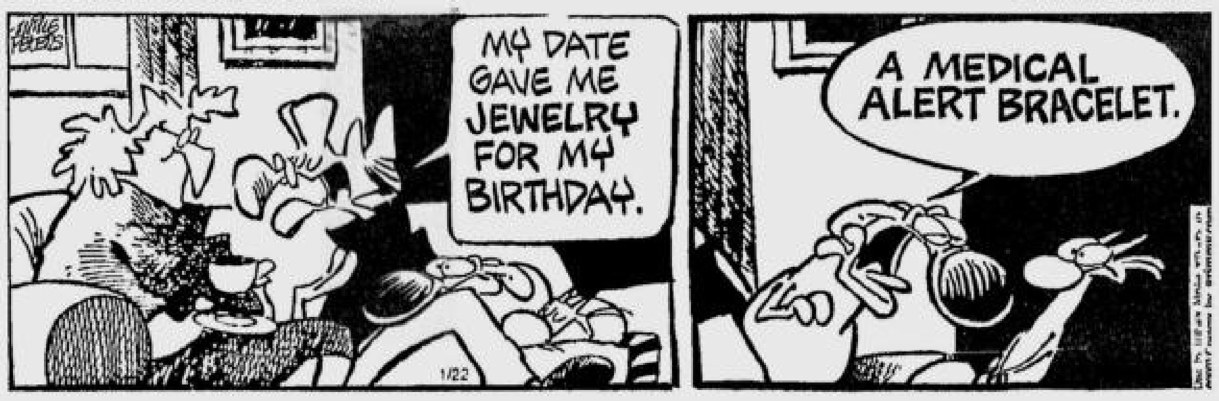
Fusion Food Studio

COME FOR AFTER THEATER FREEBIES
Congee
Wanton mien
Braised duck in rice soup
10:00pm - 1:00 am
Jan. 22 only

G/F Power Plant, Rockwell Center
Tel. No: 898-1380/ 898-0379

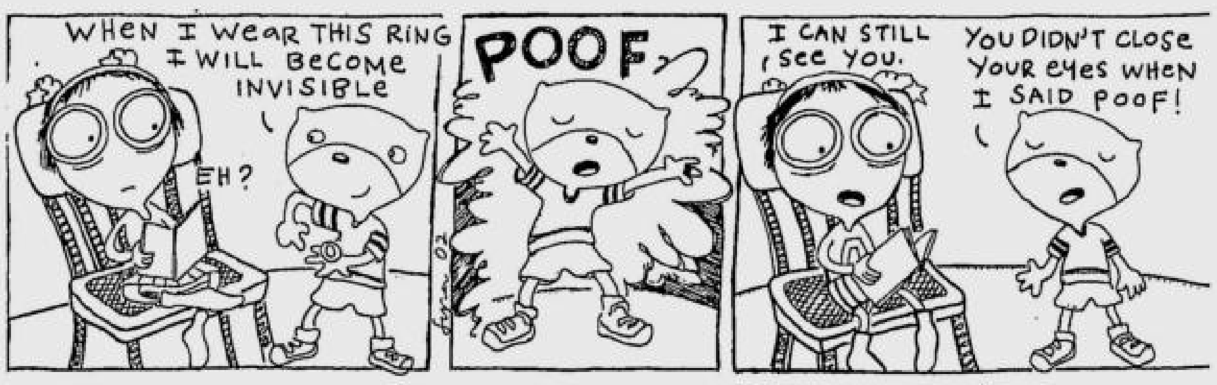
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


MY DATE GAVE ME JEWELRY FOR MY BIRTHDAY.
A MEDICAL ALERT BRACELET.
1/22

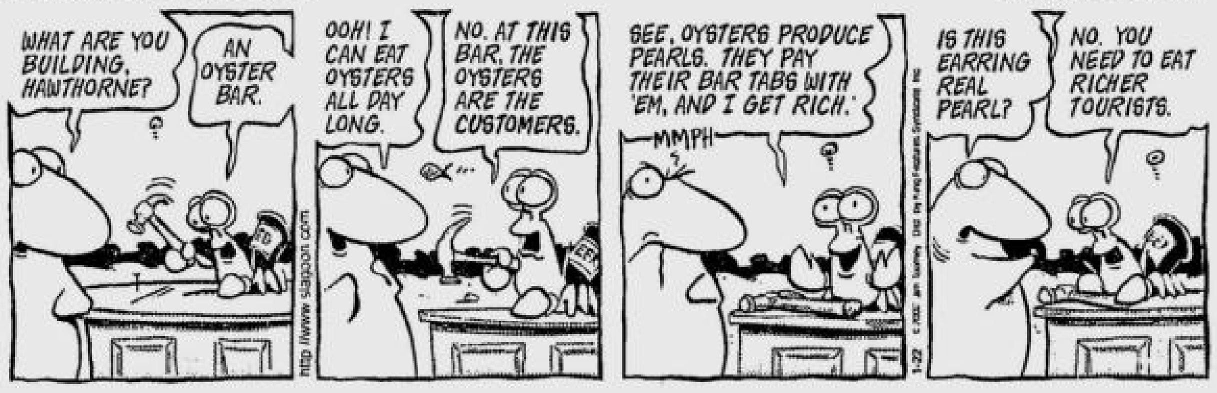
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHEN I WEAR THIS RING I WILL BECOME INVISIBLE
EH?
POOF
I CAN STILL SEE YOU.
YOU DIDN'T CLOSE YOUR EYES WHEN I SAID POOF!

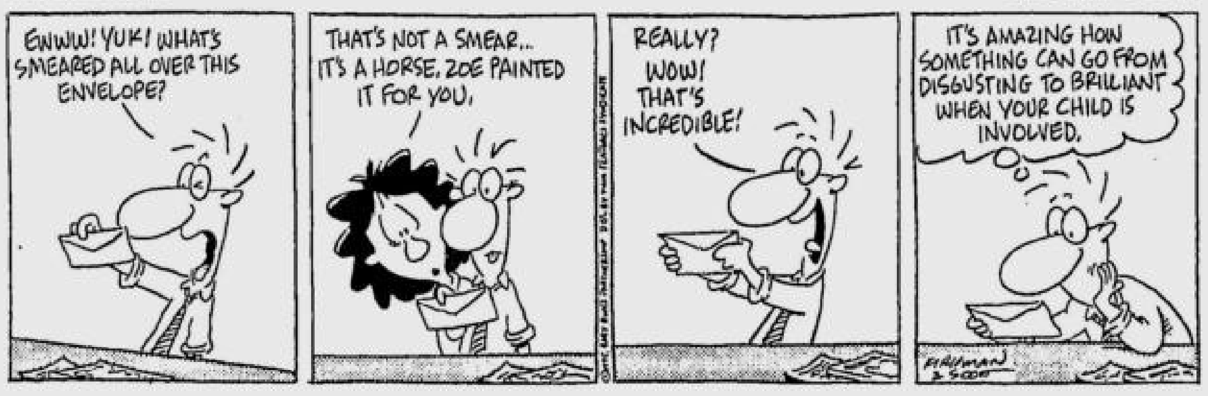
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING, HAWTHORNE?
AN OYSTER BAR.
OOH! I CAN EAT OYSTERS ALL DAY LONG.
NO. AT THIS BAR, THE OYSTERS ARE THE CUSTOMERS.
SEE, OYSTERS PRODUCE PEARLS. THEY PAY THEIR BAR TABS WITH 'EM, AND I GET RICH.
MMPH
IS THIS EARRING REAL PEARL?
NO. YOU NEED TO EAT RICHER TOURISTS.
http://www.slagoon.com

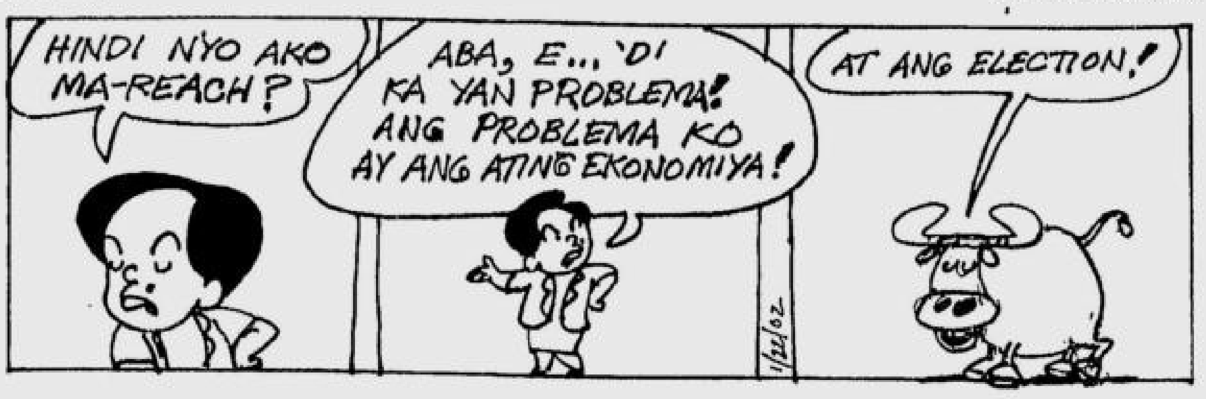
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


EWWW! YUK! WHAT'S SMEARED ALL OVER THIS ENVELOPE?
THAT'S NOT A SMEAR... IT'S A HORSE. ZOE PAINTED IT FOR YOU.
REALLY? WOW! THAT'S INCREDIBLE!
IT'S AMAZING HOW SOMETHING CAN GO FROM DISGUSTING TO BRILLIANT WHEN YOUR CHILD IS INVOLVED.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

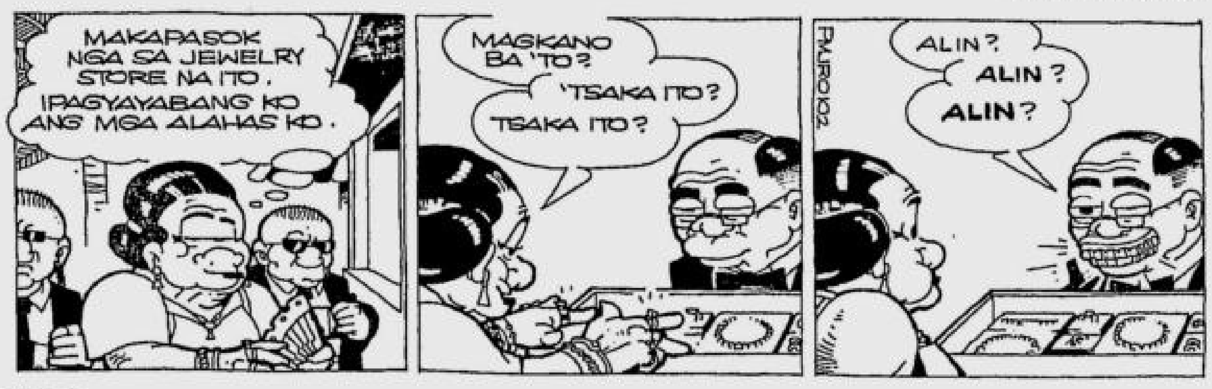
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI NYO AKO MA-REACH?
ABA, E... 'DI KA YAN PROBLEMA! ANG PROBLEMA KO AY ANG ATING EKONOMIYA!
AT ANG ELECTION!
1/22/02

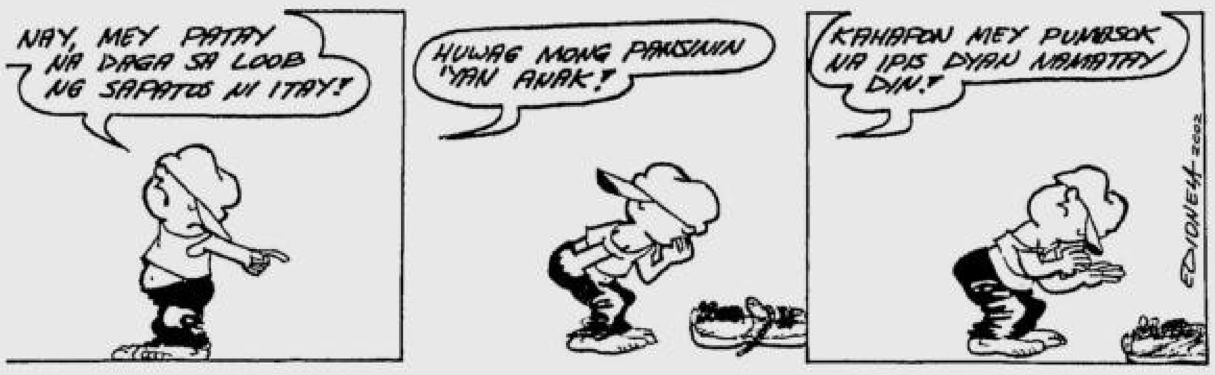
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAKAPASOK NGA SA JEWELRY STORE NA ITO. IPAGYAYABANG KO ANG MGA ALAHAS KO.
MAGKANO BA 'TO?
'TSAKA ITO?
TSAKA ITO?
ALIN?
ALIN?
ALIN?

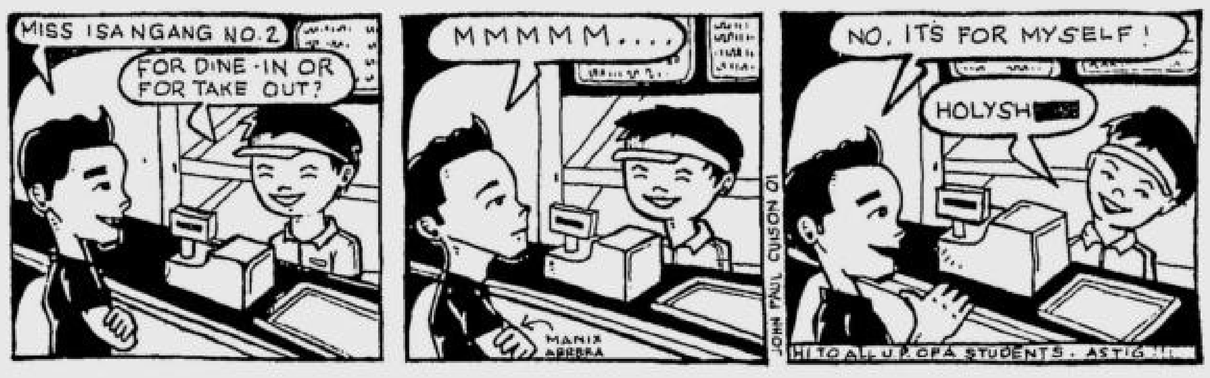
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


NAY, MEY PATAY NA DAGA SA LOOB NG SAPATOS NI ITAY!
HUWAG MONG PANSININ 'YAN ANAK!
KAHAPON MEY PUMASOK NA IPIS DYAN NAMATAY DIN!
EDIONELA 2002

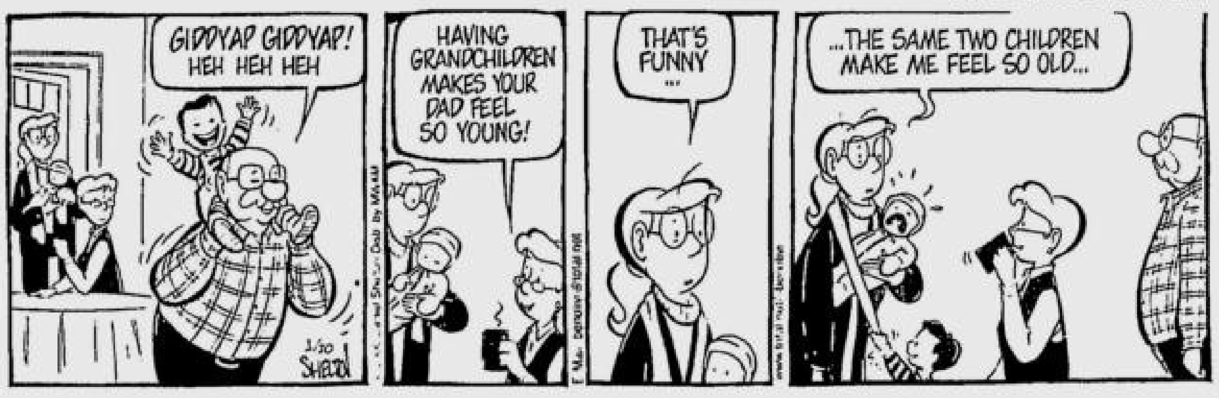
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


MISS ISANGANG NO.2
FOR DINE-IN OR FOR TAKE OUT?
MMMMM....
MANIX ABRERA
NO. ITS FOR MYSELF!
HOLYSH[redacted]
JOHN PAUL CUISON 01
HI TO ALL U.P. OPA STUDENTS. ASTIG!!!

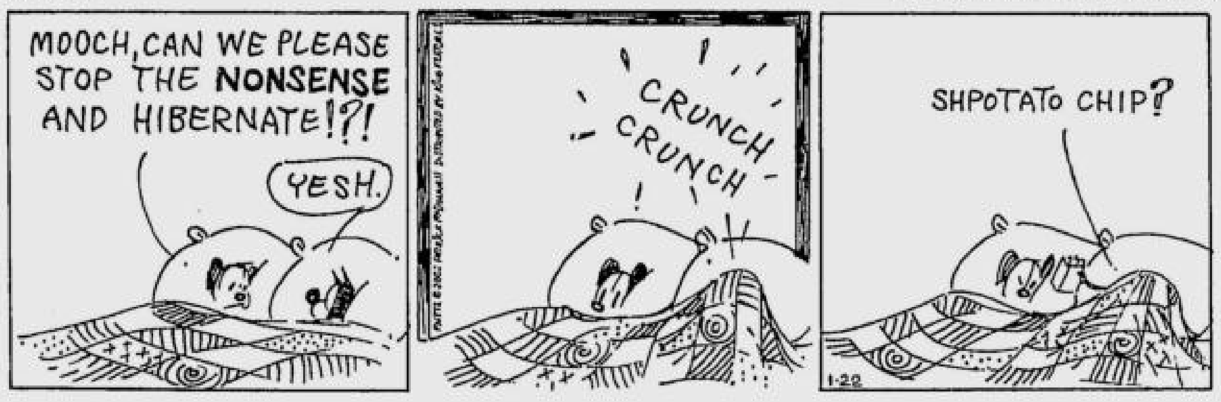
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GIDDYAP GIDDYAP! HEH HEH HEH
1/30 SHELTON
HAVING GRANDCHILDREN MAKES YOUR DAD FEEL SO YOUNG!
THAT'S FUNNY ...
...THE SAME TWO CHILDREN MAKE ME FEEL SO OLD...

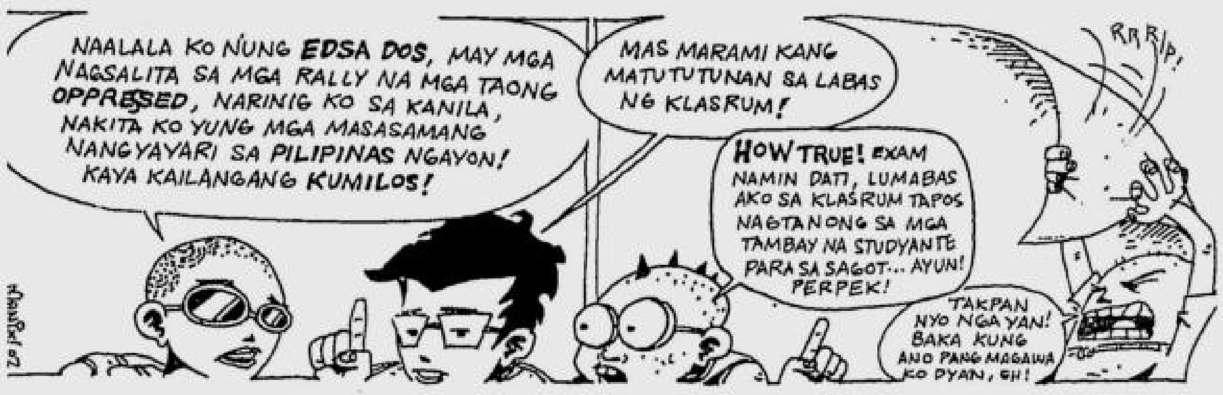
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, CAN WE PLEASE STOP THE NONSENSE AND HIBERNATE!?!
YESH.
CRUNCH CRUNCH
SHPOTATO CHIP?
1-22

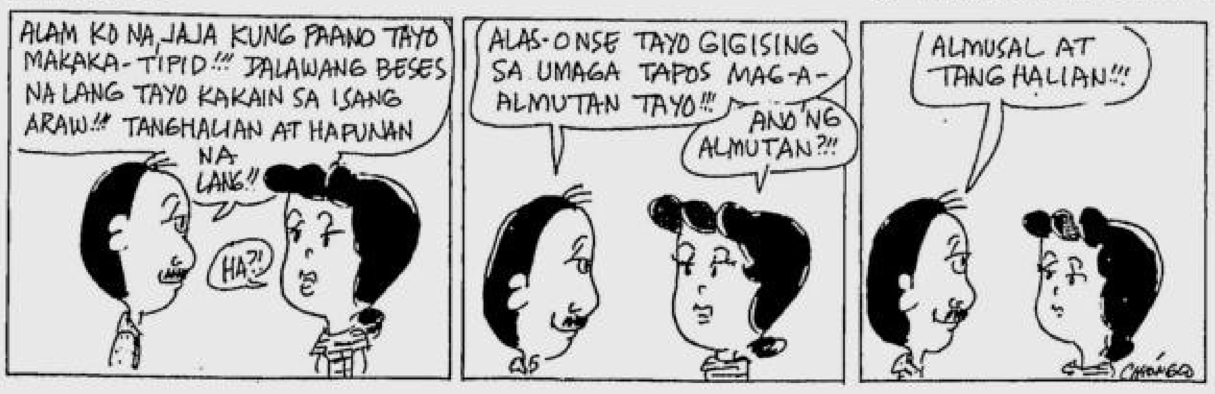
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NAALALA KO NUNG EDSA DOS, MAY MGA NAGSALITA SA MGA RALLY NA MGA TAONG OPPRESSED, NARINIG KO SA KANILA, NAKITA KO YUNG MGA MASASAMANG NANGYAYARI SA PILIPINAS NGAYON! KAYA KAILANGANG KUMILOS!
MAS MARAMI KANG MATUTUTUNAN SA LABAS NG KLASRUM!
HOW TRUE! EXAM NAMIN DATI, LUMABAS AKO SA KLASRUM TAPOS NAGTANONG SA MGA TAMBAY NA STUDYANTE PARA SA SAGOT... AYUN! PERPEK!
TAKPAN NYO NGA YAN! BAKA KUNG ANO PANG MAGAWA KO DYAN, EH!
RRRIP!

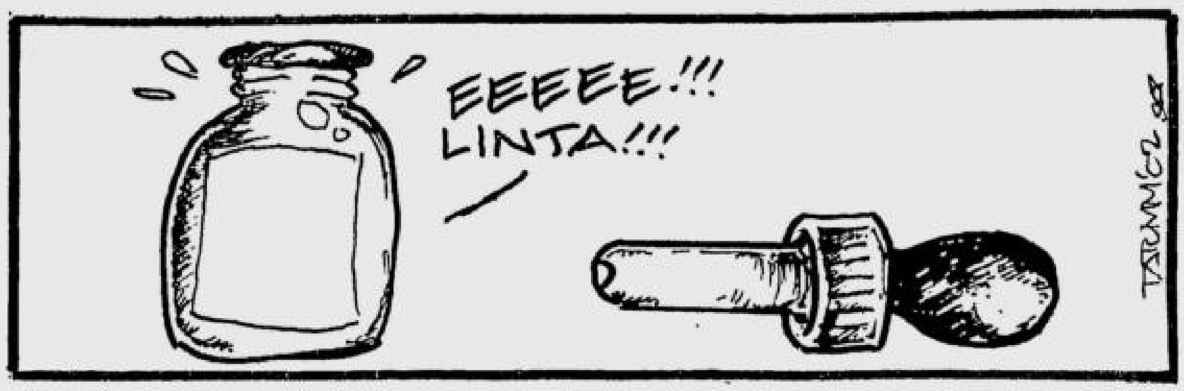
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM KO NA, JAJA KUNG PAANO TAYO MAKAKA-TIPID!!! DALAWANG BESES NA LANG TAYO KAKAIN SA ISANG ARAW!!! TANGHALIAN AT HAPUNAN NA LANG!!
HA?!
ALAS-ONSE TAYO GIGISING SA UMAGA TAPOS MAG-A-ALMUTAN TAYO!!!
ANO'NG ALMUTAN?!!
ALMUSAL AT TANGHALIAN!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


EEEEE!!! LINTA!!!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steve Perry, John Hurt, Olivia D'Abo, Diane Lane, Piper Laurie

Happy Birthday: You have a great deal to accomplish this year. The more prepared you are, the better. If you can work with what you've got you will find that you are able to move forward. Your numbers are 8, 11, 14, 25, 28, 32

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Focus on your work and getting ahead. Someone you care about will be overreacting so stay out of this person's way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The social aspect of your life is good, and insightful developments will occur within your relationships. Trips will be conducive to meeting worthwhile individuals.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stay away from individuals offering shady deals. You should put your energy into getting information to help you get ahead. Social activities will be enjoyable.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's time to help an organization you believe in. You will gain approval from people who can help you. Offer your services, not your cash.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't expect things to run according to plan at work. Partnerships may appear to be unsettled today; give others the benefit of the doubt.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Make plans to get out and experience something new. Invite a colleague to lunch at a new restaurant that offers a foreign menu. Good conversation will lead to new ideas.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Health problems may stop you from enjoying things. You may have the inclination to take on too much and although you will finish what you start, it will be at a high price.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will meet someone interesting while traveling or attending a seminar. Romance is in the air. Don't be too trusting; take your time and let the friendship grow.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Watch out for someone at work who may be jealous of you. Do your job well, avoid gossip and you should be able to get ahead. Getting together with friends will lead to a creative period.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take the day off and pamper yourself. You can make changes to your appearance that will turn heads. Don't overdo it when it comes to physical exercise.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Get out and do things with friends and you will avoid some of the turmoil at home. You should be able to change something that you don't like about yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Visit your travel agent and figure out where you'd like to go for that vacation you've been dreaming of. New connections can be made through friends and relatives so don't sit around home.

Birthday Baby: You will have strong ties to your home and to your parents. You will find ways to enhance your own space so that you can feel comfortable. You will want to join groups that have a purpose.

DAILY CROSSWORD

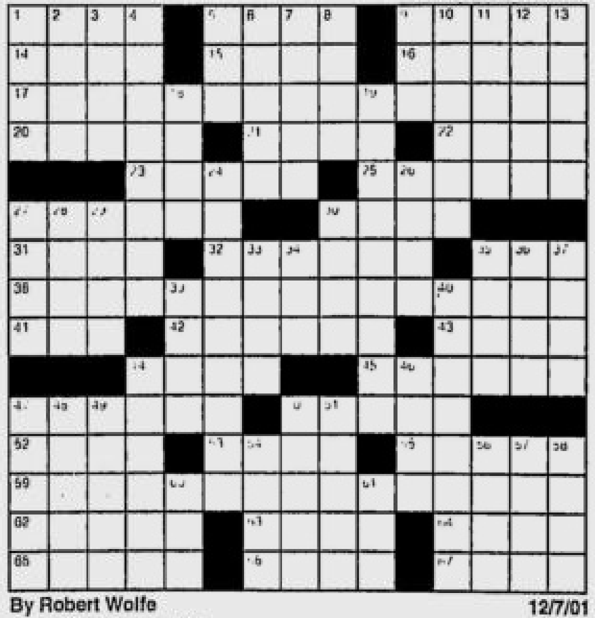
IMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS

1 Cad
5 Ardently eager
9 Low voices
14 Pasture piece
15 Computer input
16 Celestial hunter
17 General dingers?
20 1957 hit, "Wake Up Little __"
21 Option word
22 S-shaped curve
23 Yucky
25 Check
27 Craving
30 Victim
31 Top guns
32 Spin
35 Highest
38 General defense plan?
41 Longest time
42 Aplenty
43 Darn!
44 Presidential no
45 Most timid
47 Birthplace of St. Francis
50 Gives medicine to
52 Tonsil ending?
53 Brad or spike
55 Admit
59 General subsistence?
62 Actress Verdugo
63 Foray
64 A Barrymore
65 Stitch anew
66 Smeltery piles
67 Lip

DOWN

1 Old crones
2 Creamy shade
3 Remarkable times
4 Theory of proletarian revolution
5 Circulars
6 Gentleman's gentleman
7 Elba's country
8 River blocks
9 Scary word?
10 Military storehouse
11 Military tactic
12 Skin irritations
13 Map on a map
18 Shred
19 Devoid of compassion
24 Creating a notched edge
26 Virginia's dance?
27 Engagement
28 Parrot
29 Espied
30 Jack of talk-shows
33 European capital
34 However, for short
35 A fact
36 Mel and his brothers in baseball
37 Hey you!
39 Grows older
40 Licorice flavorings
44 Product that "gets the red out"
46 Conn's location
47 One who points
48 No longer fresh
49 Cynthia of "St. Elsewhere"
50 Kuwaiti currency
51 Song of the past
54 Dynamic starter?
56 Skater Lipinski
57 March middle
58 Headlines
60 Slangy negative
61 Radical grp. of the '60s



By Robert Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

12/7/01

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	H	A	K	E		S	P	R	Y		B	I	F	F
H	I	R	E	R		A	L	O	E		I	N	R	E
A	F	I	R	E		H	E	W	A	L	K	S	A	S
D	I	D	O		D	A	D		R	A	I	T	T	S
			S	U	E	R		M	E	I	N			
I	F	H	E	S	B	A	L	A	N	C	I	N	G	
D	I	A	N	E	S		A	D	D			I	R	E
E	R	N	E	S		O	N	E		T	A	T	A	S
E	T	O			C	H	A		S	E	L	E	C	T
	H	I	S	F	A	M	I	L	Y	S	T	R	E	E
			T	I	D	Y		I	N	T	I			
G	E	O	R	G	E		A	N	E		T	A	C	O
O	N	H	I	S	N	O	S	E		S	U	G	A	R
R	O	M	P		Z	E	T	A		A	D	E	P	T
E	L	S	E		A	R	I	L		C	E	D	E	S

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12/7/01

Discover the four 'Ds' of inner and outer beauty

THERE is a mythical potion called Ambrosia, the elixir of the gods, which when imbibed prolongs one's youth and preserves one's beauty.

To be forever young may certainly be considered a gift from the gods, and the tireless search for manmade ambrosia still goes on.

Is there a secret to preserving and enhancing one's youth? I believe there is. A healthy lifestyle and a positive outlook on life can add not just years to your life but life to your years. And if you are determined—if not intrigued—to discover it with me, then let the adventure begin!

Embracing the four Ds

The four Ds for beauty and wellness are desire, determination, dedication and delight.

Desire—You must want to be attractive, to have a fit body and, more importantly, to feel good about yourself. Surrender to this desire. Commit your heart.

Determination—You must will yourself to adopt a wellness lifestyle. Change your attitude toward your body and your health. Believe that you can do it. Commit your mind.

Dedication—Devote yourself to exercise and a healthy eating plan. Commit your body.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

> A healthy lifestyle and a positive outlook on life can add not just years to your life but life to your years

Delight—Love yourself first and the positive results will follow. Commit your psyche.

Mind-body connection

Dr. Deepak Chopra, a world-famous author and guru, says, "Look to the land where no one is old, it is nowhere but in yourself." Thus, it follows, if you think old, you will become old. So think young and positive with this youth-enhancing exercise for the mind. Think your way to wellness! Tap the power of love to calm your spirits, to heal your restless heart, to clear your muddled mind.

The pink bubble

Find a quiet corner. Disconnect yourself from people and all electronic devices. That means the television, telephone, cell phones, pagers, etc.

Close your eyes. Breathe. Focus on your breathing.

Once you have reached a level of calm, use your imagination to create a pink bubble big enough to cover you. Imagine its pink light bathing you with love (pink is the color of love). This light enters every pore of your body until your breath is pink, your vision is pink, your mood is pink.

Affirm love for yourself with these words: "I am loved, I radiate love, I am love" (inspired by author Shakti Gawain).

Love yourself, love your body

Love begins with loving yourself. So don't be so hard on yourself. Begin by pampering your body with my favorite Sugar Scrub for skin rejuvenation.

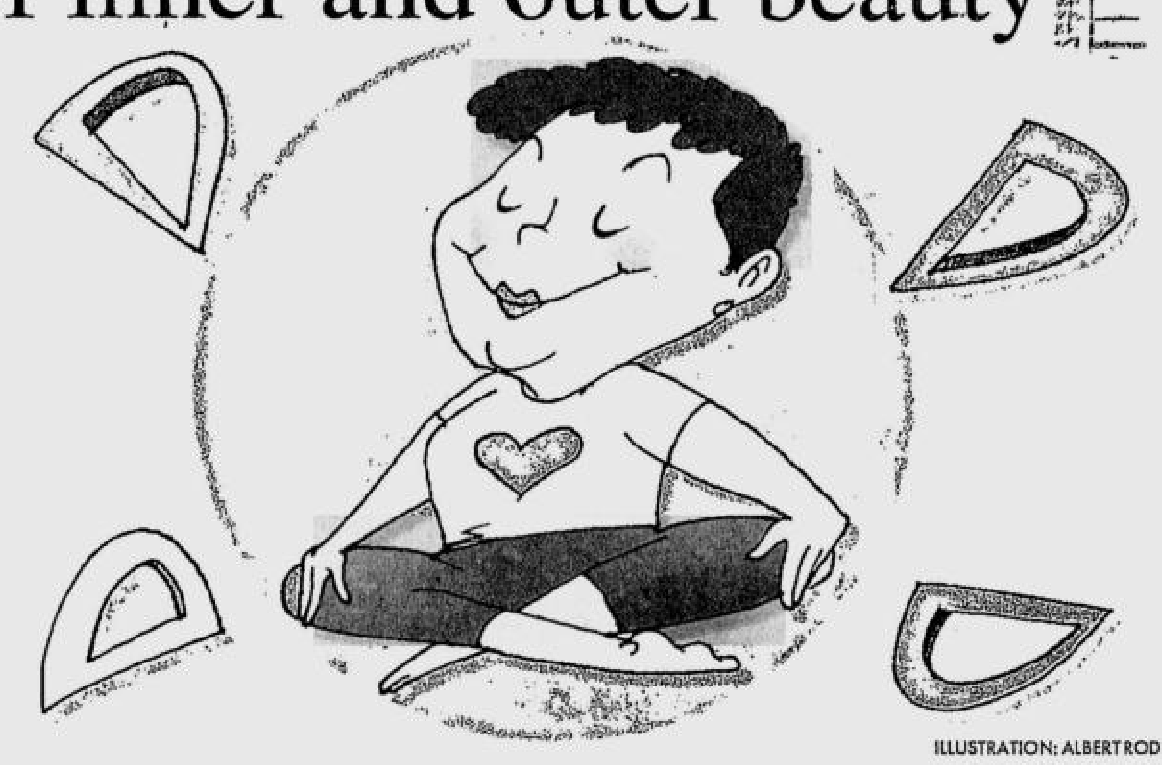


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Sugar Scrub

2 c brown or white sugar

½ c olive oil (for dry skin), light olive oil or corn oil (for oily skin)

Rub the oil all over your naked body and face (that means sans makeup). With clean hands, take some sugar and rub in a circular motion. Stop when you feel your skin tingle from the light abrasion or when it turns pink. Shower with warm water. Soap your body. End the shower with cold water. Use a light body and face moisturizer. See the amazing results in 10 minutes.

Loving yourself has only just begun. Congratulations! You have made the first step toward an exciting journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

Love and light to you!

E-mail the author at coryquirino@yahoo.com

There's something about Cory

(From page C1)

Cory was unhappy about her weight gain and flabbiness. She went on a crash diet and recovered her ideal weight. However, the crash diet was not reliable and proved to be a disadvantage. She then embarked on a fitness program with dedication. Today, she would caution people against radical dieting.

The fitness program she embraced consisted of a good eating lifestyle. In addition, she followed an exercise program consisting of a 30-minute aerobic workout followed by an hour in the gym for weight training thrice a week. Today, at Slimmers World, she has modified her program to a 20-minute aerobic workout and 1½ hours in the gym. She is happy to say that she has a stronger, better-looking body now than she had a decade ago (with no thanks to liposuction).

Cory was born to Nena Rastrollo (a campus queen during her time) and Tomas Quirino, son of the late President Elpidio Quirino. She took up communication arts at Maryknoll College. Her first job was with an advertising agency. From there, she went to work for Hyatt Regency Manila as sales representative. She eventually became the hotel's director of public relations. She also joined Bancom as part of the investment management and marketing services, as well as the human resources development department at 3M.

Media career

Her television career began with Johnny Litton on "Oh No, It's Johnny," where she hosted the segment on civic clubs. She then dabbled in newscasting for IBC 13 and cohosted "Hotline sa Trese" with Joseph Estrada, the very first crime-exposé show. She also hosted several shows until "Citiline" was offered to her. The ABS-CBN show successfully ran for eight years and even won a Catholic Mass Media Award.

At the height of the show's popularity, Cory figured in front-page news when she was kidnapped in Laguna after a whole day's shoot around Lake Caliraya, and successfully got away from her kidnappers. Unfortunately, her driver was killed by the kidnappers, all five of whom were eventually caught and imprisoned.

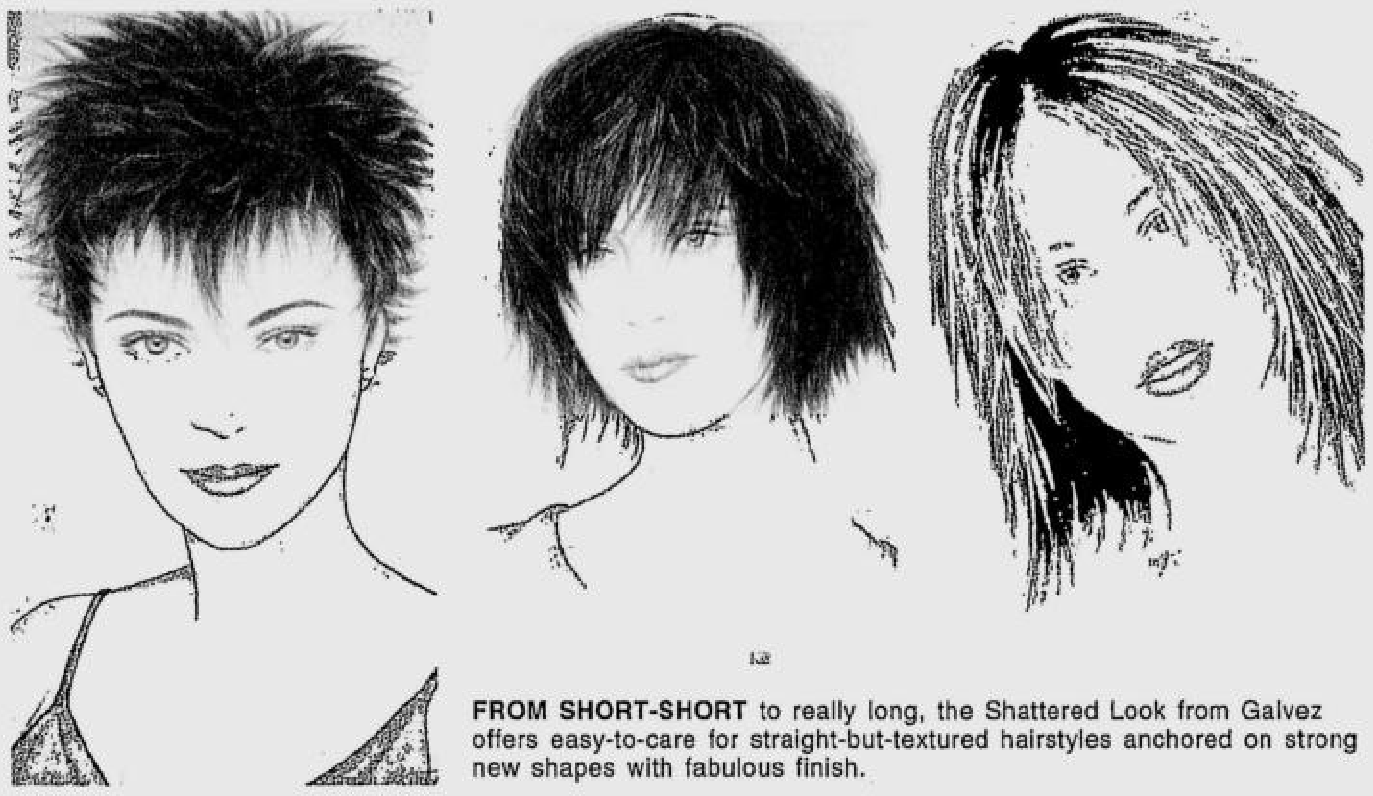
After "Citiline" went off the air, Cory became a more committed Rotarian, having become president of the Makati Legaspi Club. She now cohosts a crime prevention show called "117" (the 24-hour police emergency hotline in the country) on NBN channel 4 (formerly PTV 4) with PNP chief Larry Mendoza and Interior Secretary Joey Lina.

Before becoming a fitness buff, Cory was a columnist for the Philippine Daily Express and the Manila Times, where she wrote human interest stories. Her first book, "Waiting for the Light," recounts her kidnapping experience and dwelt on the power of prayer. The second, "Forever Young: Guide to Beauty and Fitness," was the book version of the popular segment "Forever Young" on "Citiline." Aside from the fitness book, Cory also came out with a workout video called "Forever Young: Cory Quirino's Celebrity Workout For Beginners."

She currently has two books in the making: "Forever Young—Again: A Guide to Beauty and Wellness" and "Forever Young: My A-B-Cs to Beauty and Wellness," a booklet version.

With her new Lifestyle column, "Inside Out," Cory hopes to use her love for writing in sharing her secrets for staying young through a holistic approach to total wellbeing.

Softly tousled or shattered–take your pick



FROM SHORT-SHORT to really long, the Shattered Look from Galvez offers easy-to-care for straight-but-textured hairstyles anchored on strong new shapes with fabulous finish.

HAIR will move from straight to textured and back for maximum versatility. Irregular lengths and rougher surface that create natural texture, which sways with a subtle movement will be the head-turning style for 2002.

So says Tony Galvez, one of the country's authorities on professional hair care and styling, of this year's mane trends.

Galvez's Shattered Look, for example, designed for the busy woman, comes in several lengths to fit different lifestyles, face shapes and hair textures. Short-short is ideal for the busy older woman with its strong new cut to lift the face—hair stands out softly tousled. Younger women with more time for hair care will like the shoulder length and long-hair versions—a little straight but shaggier, providing softness and femininity.

To achieve the look, use a hand blower with head down and your hands as brush to increase volume from the scalp, directing the hands from bottom tip and out. "The hair should look like there's a light gust of wind under ends," he says. "If you want more texture, go for a thicker product like molding pomade. If your goal is soft, subtle flick, choose a light styling cream."

New hair products such as styling cream, styling pomade and molding cream can give hair texture and hold, making it possible for every woman to have an easy hairstyle she can do by herself.

Get smart with skin care

GET more visible antiaging benefits with a program that includes Mary Kay's famous TimeWise skin care line, Day Solution and Night Solution. The program guarantees a 155-percent increase in skin softness, 91-percent improvement in skin smoothness and 48-percent reduction in the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

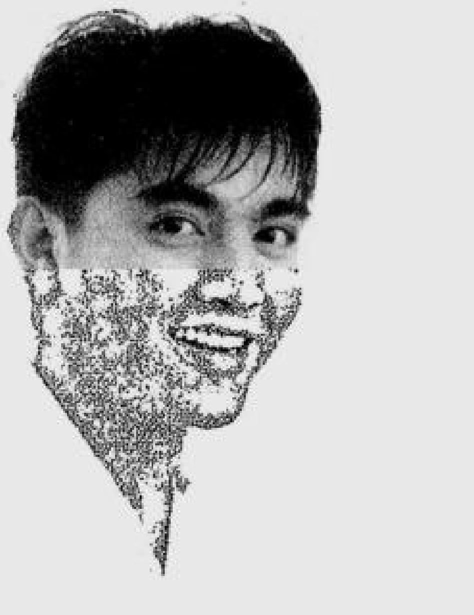
The TimeWise line consists of a streamlined skin care program that delivers advanced benefits. Formulated with an exclusive, patent-pending complex, the TimeWise system works with your skin's natural system to help reduce the visible signs of aging. Cleanse, exfoliate and freshen in one, simple, time-saving step with TimeWise 3-in-1 Cleanser, which removes makeup, dirt and dull surface cells. It effectively clears impurities, erases the visible signs of aging and restores the look of younger skin with its blue micro-beads.

TimeWise 3-in-1 Cleanser also contains Vitamin E, an antioxidant and a Vitamin A derivative to smooth and tone the skin. It also has green microbeads to exfoliate and freshen skin. After cleansing, use TimeWise Age-Fighting Moisturizer to firm and soften skin and reduce the appearance of fine lines for a more youthful look. This oil-free lotion has multiple visible antiaging benefits. Its exclusive hydrating formula absorbs quickly, leaving skin feeling soft, supple and always fresh. It is clinically proven to hydrate the skin for 10 hours and is suitable for all skin types.

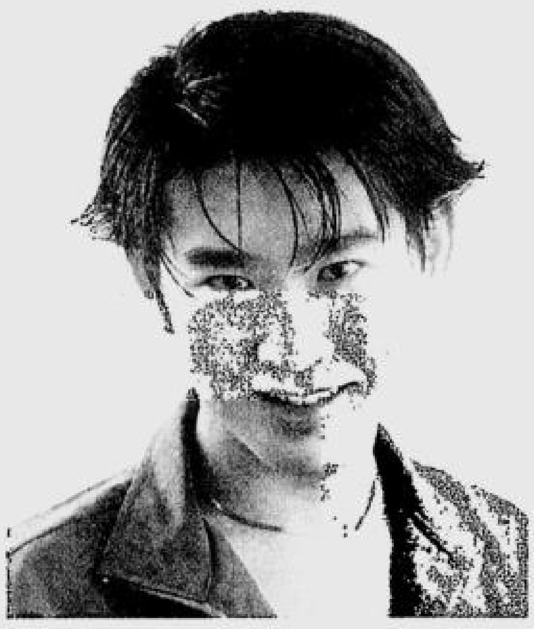
For day, use Mary Kay's Day Solution with SPF 15 to protect against environmental damage as botanical extracts supply the added energy skin needs throughout the day. Night Solution renews skin overnight as its advanced vitamin blend helps repair the skin, while botanical extracts replenish for a fresh start in the morning.

Around the clock, both formulas supply a retinoid to help boost collagen production—a 127-percent improvement in skin softness; 56-percent improvement in skin smoothness; 42-percent increase in skin's natural moisture level and 34-percent reduction in the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Call 893-4855 or visit Mary Kay Philippines' head office at La Fuerza Compound, 2241 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City.



FEATHER CUT
Senior stylist Obet Federizo whips up the "bed head," undone look, dyed ash blond, lightly cropped at the sides and back for Anton Broas Jr.



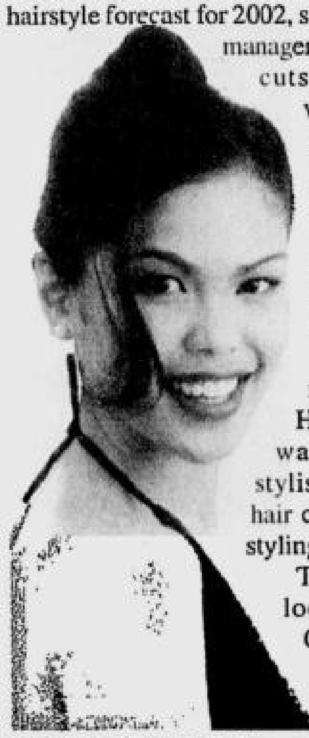
TEXTURIZED CUT
Salon manager Mel Quita jazzes up this popular '80s cut for Mikee Cheng with flirty flyaways and two-tone hair coloring: copper blond and golden blond.

The Paradigm shift to the '80s, with a twist

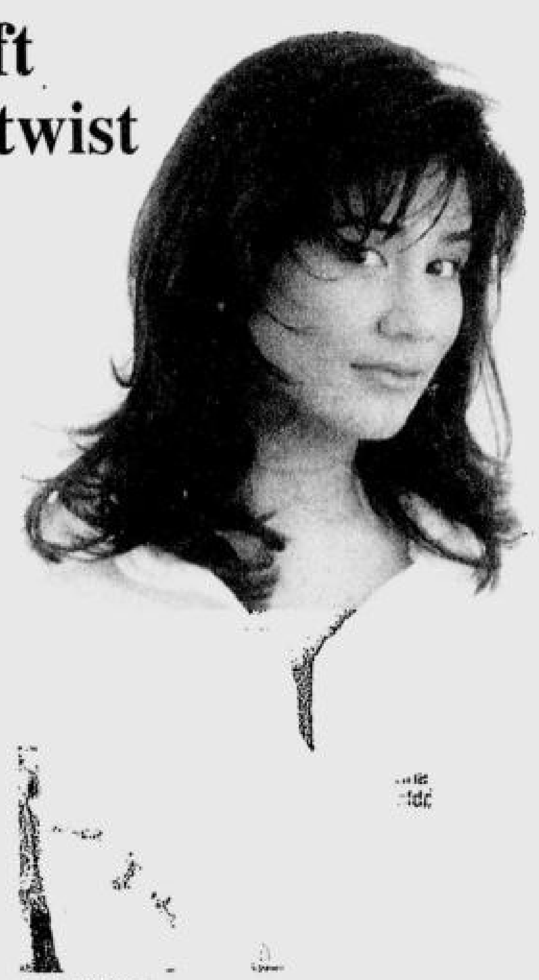
ULTRA-MODERN styles make up Paradigm's hairstyle forecast for 2002, says Mel Quita, salon manager. Texturized, layered cuts with feathery, whimsical tips are the rage, plus the use of molding mud and pomade. In terms of colors, the Paradigm stylists are seeing red, gold and copper.

By attending seminars in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Paradigm stylists are updated on hair cutting, coloring and styling techniques.

The upscale salon is located on the 3/L Glorietta 2, Makati (tel. 840-3885/3876), 4/F Makati Shangri-La (813-5002/8888 local 7089/7090) and 4/F Discovery Suites, Ortigas (638-1917/1918).



UPSWEPT FORMAL
The layered cut is accented with tendrils for Lauriele Javier by Obet Federizo.



U-SHAPED
The familiar angular cut gets some fringes from Quita. The result? A chic textured, layered look for Maria Clara Lopez.

Fighting wrinkles and weight gain with pins and needles

By Marge C. Enriquez

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, a medical acupuncture conference in Shanghai reported that patients who were treated for migraine not only were relieved of pain but also of wrinkles. Today, cosmetic acupuncture or facial rejuvenation acupuncture is touted as the ultimate, nonsurgical face-lift. The procedure not only reduces signs of aging, but also bolsters the whole body's well-being.

Acupuncture is also more effective for weight loss compared to antidepressants and fat inhibiting pills. It involves the insertion of fine needles into certain areas of the face and body along meridians or energy pathways. Particular points are selected to maneuver the movement of energy in the body, according to the person's needs.

"Acupuncture means the balancing of energy. It's as simple as that. However, when you talk about scientific advances, it's not that simple. There is a connecting pathway from the point in the body to a specific site on the brain. If you puncture the shin, which is referred to as stomach 36 in acupuncture, there is a nerve that goes to the stomach that induces it to produce more acids. They have verified this with live models and magnetic resonance imaging. Acupuncture is not that esoteric anymore," explains Dr. Edwin Falconi.

Laser or needle?

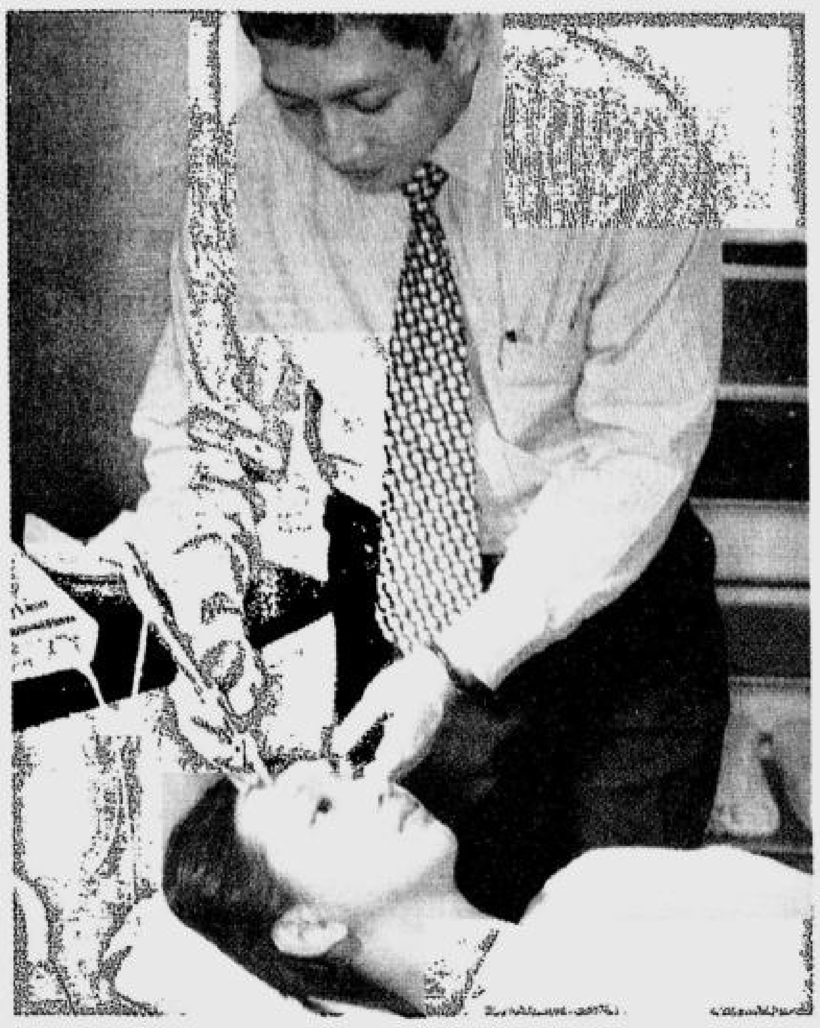
Although an internist, Falconi studied under Dr. Benjamin Aquino, the medical proponent of acupuncture in the country and the Philippine Scientific Acupuncture Association.

Dr. Falconi uses both needle and laser. "Laser acupuncture works differently with needles in terms of the conduction of pain. Your body secretes neuropeptides that modify your perception of pain," he explains.

The laser is used on children, adults who panic at the sight of needles and patients who need to have their points stimulated on the feet and in cases of peripheral neuropathy.

"These are diseases caused by diabetes, chemotherapy producing peripheral neuropathy. We use local points along the hands and feet and that's a little painful. I use laser so it's less traumatic."

However, there are patients that prefer the needles to the laser. "They tell me needles 'make you feel alive'," says Dr. Falconi. "The laser stimulates nerves and rearranges chemical composition. Acupuncture needles act as an irritant to the energy point, sparking a cascading effect to promote secretion of endorphins or pain management."



Cosmetic acupuncture is touted as the ultimate, nonsurgical face-lift; it not only reduces signs of aging but also helps control the appetite

CALCARRIE'S model Jeanelyn Cuyugan keeps her skin healthy with cosmetic acupuncture as a preventive measure.

Losing weight

Although many patients come to Dr. Falconi at Intercare Healthcare Systems (26-A Eisenhower St., Greenhills, San Juan; tel. 724-6631/722-1846) for pain management, his "bread and butter" has been weight reduction by acupuncture. Many patients who want to slim down aren't really fat. But due to vanity, a French doctor discovered two energy points in the ear that corresponded to the digestive system and the appetite. By stimulating these points, the hunger was controlled.

DR. Edwin Falconi uses laser acupuncture on dancer Katherine Sanchez. Laser acupuncture is recommended for patients who are afraid of needles. PHOTOS BY NEAL OSHIMA

"In cosmetic acupuncture, if you lose weight, there will be no flabbiness. The skin becomes taut. Even if there's no weight loss, the clothes become looser," he says. "That's why people aren't successful with weight reduction. The stomach has expanded, and here comes this diet allowing you to eat only one cup. You're putting this little on this big stomach, so it starts to grumble. With acupuncture, you maintain your diet while the stomach shrinks to its normal size. If you take in the usual amount of food, you feel full."

He adds that "acupuncture is natural, you can't cheat your body. If you're approaching your ideal body weight, the effect is slower because you can't go below that."

Benefits

Dr. Falconi experimented on cosmetic acupuncture with drivers in 1987. He would stick in needles on their deep furrows. After a few sessions, he noticed that from afar there were fine white lines across their dark foreheads. It turned out that the acupuncture was taking effect. The skin had extended to expose the valleys of the furrows.

"After a few treatments, when I saw them from afar, I thought their wrinkles had worsened. The skin started to stretch. The portion that was not touched by the light was fair. You can see the white skin going out," he says.

The process takes 40 minutes. Special needles are inserted on areas where they appear, such as above the hairline, along the sides of the eyes, the nasolabial fold and corners of the mouth. The needles are twirled until the skin grasps the needle; sometimes the patient will feel as if a current has gone through. The patient rests for 30 minutes until the needles are removed.

Fine lines vanish while deeper wrinkles are lessened. Bags around the eyes and neck become taut. The skin is moisturized with an increased flow of blood and lymph to the face. The eyes are clearer; double chins are decreased; better hormonal balance cures acne and the face is more relaxed.

"It makes the skin smoother. It increases the tensile strength of the underlying connective tissues under the skin. You look more alive because the complexion becomes rosier. No scars are produced. The needles are so fine. It's that simple. It stretches the skin," says Dr. Falconi.

Aside from diminishing fine lines, sagging is reduced, muscle tone is improved, pores are tightened, and puffiness is reduced. In other words, a patient will come out looking 10-15 years younger after 24 sessions (three times a week). However, if the aging signs are just beginning, a course of 12 sessions will suffice. In six sessions, droopy eyelids can be lifted (as long as they are not dropping to the floor).

Curing freckles

"We advise that before you get wrinkles, go for preventive treatment," says Dr. Falconi. "Not only do you treat the wrinkle but also the

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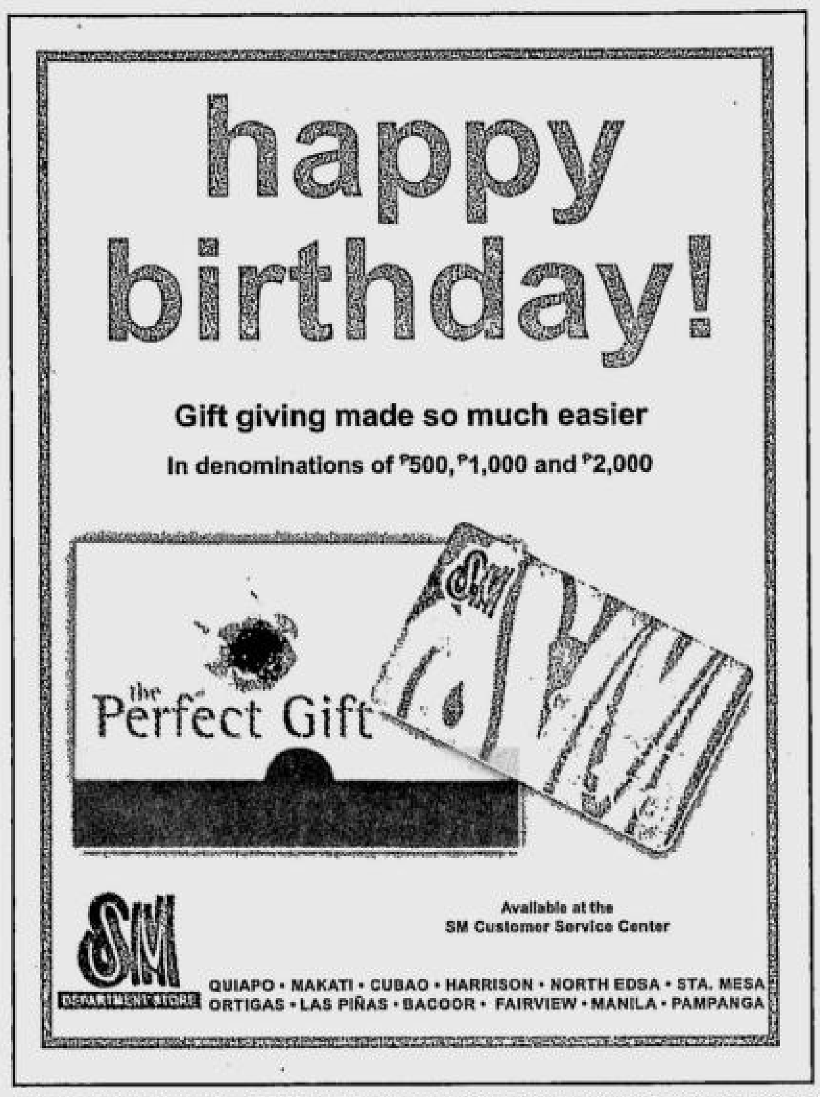

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